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Winter-Evening CONFERENCE BETWEEN Neighbours.

In Two Parts.

The Fourth Edition Corrected.

Prov. xxvij. 17.

As Iron ſharpeneth Iron, ſo doth the countenance of a Man his Friend.

LONDON

Printed by *J. Leake* for **Luke Meredith**, at the *Angel* in *Amen-Corner*, 1689.

Collegii Emmanuelis
Liber

THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader,

I *Muſt on the behalf of the Perſons concerned in theſe Papers now in thy hands, beſpeak thy Candor in two or three Particulars following.*

Firſt, That thou wilt not ſuffer thy Curioſity to carry thee ſo far as to be very inquiſitive who they were or where they dwelt who held theſe Conferences; for beſides that the knowledge thereof would be of no uſe, there are ſeveral other reaſons why I cannot gratifie thee therein, further than by giving their true Characters, which thou wilt find ſubjoined.

Secondly, That whereas at the entrance of theſe Conferences, and perhaps alſo here and there in other parts of them, thou may'ſt obſerve ſome ſhort touches of mirth, thou wilt not be offended at them as ill comporting either with the gravity of the Speakers, or the ſerioufneſs of the Deſign. For if thou conſider the humour of the Age, thou wilt not find thy ſelf obliged to impute it to the levity of Sebaſtian's *temper, but to his diſcretion and wiſdom, that he doth accommodate himſelf to thoſe he would gain upon; as he that would catch Fiſh, muſt ſuit his Baits to their Guſt and Phancy.*

Thirdly, Becauſe it is not unlikely but thou wilt take notice, that the Interlocutors do now and then upon occaſion uſe complemental Attributions towards each other, and applaud one anothers Wit or Eloquence; which being now put in print, may, to a ſevere Cenſor, ſeem to ſavour of oſtentation,

and

and look like clawing and flattering one another. Therefore thou are desired to remember, that this was done only amongst themselves and in private Conversation, where such kinds of Civility are usually practised without offence or imputation.

As for the general Design of these Conferences, I make bold to tell thee, that it is apparently noble and generous, namely, to lead the way to more manly Conversation, especially amongst the better ranks of men, to demonstrate that the strictest Vertue is consistent with the greatest Prudence and Civility; and in short, to raise the dejected and depressed Spirit of Piety in the World. The consideration hereof encouraged the Publication, and I hope will sufficiently recommend it to thy Acceptance.

Farewel.

The

The Characters of the Perſons in the two following Conferences.

Sebaſtian, a Learned and Pious Gentleman, who takes all advantages of ingaging thoſe he converſes with, in ſobriety and a ſenſe of Religion.

Philander, a Gentile and Ingenuous Perſon, but too much addicted to the lightneſſes of the Age, till reclaimed by the Converſation of *Sebaſtian*.

Biophilus, a ſceptical Perſon, who had no ſettled Belief of any thing; but eſpecially was averſe to the great Doctrines of Chriſtianity, concerning the Immortality of the Soul and the Life to come: and therefore conſequently was much concerned for the preſent life. Till at length awakened by the diſcreet Reaſonings of *Sebaſtian*, and the affectionate Diſcourſes of *Philander*, he begins to deliberate of what before he deſpiſed.

Eulabes, a truly prudent and holy Man, who made his life a ſtudy of and preparation for Death, propounded as an Example for Imitation, in the ſecond Conference.

The

The Argument of the firſt Conference.

Sebaſtian *viſiting his Neighbour* Philander, *after a little time ſpent in civil Salutations, is quickly preſt by him to the too uſual Entertainment of liberal Drinking*; *which* Sebaſtian *at firſt modeſtly and facetiouſly declines*; *but afterwards more directly ſhews the folly and unmanlineſs of it. He is then invited to Gaming, which he alſo excuſing himſelf from, and giving his reaſons againſt*, Philander *complains of the difficulty of ſpending time without ſuch diverſions. Whereupon* Sebaſtian *repreſents to him ſundry Entertainments of Time both more delightful and more profitable than the forementioned*; *amongſt which, that of friendly and ingenuous Diſcourſe: and from thence they are led on to debate about Religious Conference*; *the Uſefulneſs, Eaſineſs, Prudence and Gentility of which are largely demonſtrated: Of which* Philander *being convinced, inquires the way of entring into it, of continuing and managing of it. In which being inſtructed by* Sebaſtian, *he reſolves to put it in practice.*

The

The Argument of the ſecond Conference.

In the former Conference Sebaſtian *having convinced* Philander *of the great importance of Religion, and the wiſdom of making it as well the ſubject of ſocial Communication as of retired Meditation: Accordingly they two meet on purpoſe this ſecond time to conferr about it. But* Biophilus, *a ſceptical Perſon, being in their Company, he at firſt diverts them from their deſign by other Diſcourſe; till after a while, under the diſguiſe of News, he is wheedled into this ſubject before he was aware: And then he puts them upon the proof of thoſe Principles which they would have ſuppoſed. Upon this occaſion the foundations of Religion are ſearched into, and particularly that great Point concerning* A Judgment to come, *is ſubſtantially proved: Which being done, and* Biophilus *thereby rendered ſomewhat more inclinable to be ſerious, they then purſue their firſt intentions, and diſcourſe warmly and ſenſibly of another World, and of the neceſſary preparations for it, ſo long till they not only inflame their own hearts with Devotion, but ſtrike ſome ſparks of it into* Biophilus *alſo.*

A

Winter-Evening CONFERENCE BETWEEN Two Neighbours AT *PHILANDER*'s Houſe.

Sebaſtian. A Good Evening to you, good *Philander*, I am glad to find you in Health, and I hope all your Family is ſo too.

Philander. I humbly thank you, Sir, we are all well (God be praiſed) and the better to ſee you here; for I hope you come with intentions to give us the Diverſion of your good Company this long Evening.

Sebaſt. If that will do you any pleaſure, I am at your Service. For, to deal plainly, I came with the reſolution to ſpend an hour or two with you; provided, it be not unſeaſonable for your Occaſions, nor intrench upon any buſineſs of your Family.

Phil. Buſineſs, Sir! at this time of the Year we are even weary with reſt, and tired with having nothing to do.

Sebaſt. It is a time of leiſure, I confeſs; the Earth reſts, and ſo do we; yet, I thank God, my time never lies upon my hands, for I can alway find ſomething or other to employ my ſelf in. When the Fields lie dead and admit of no Huſbandry, I then can cultivate the little Garden of my own Soul; and when there is no Recreation abroad, I have a Company of honeſt old Fellows in Leathern Coats, which find me Divertiſement at home.

Phil. I know the Company you mean, though I confeſs I have not much acquaintance with them; but do you not find it a melancholy thing to converſe with the dead?

Sebaſt. Why ſhould you ſay they are dead? no, they are immortal, they cannot die, they are all Soul, Reaſon without Paſſion, and Eloquence without Noiſe or Clamour. Indeed they do not eat and drink, by which only Argument ſome Men now a-days prove themſelves to be alive, as *Cyrus* proved the Diviny of his God *Bel.* But theſe are kept without coſt, and yet retain the ſame Countenance and Humour, and are always chearful and diverting. Beſides, they have this peculiar Quality, that a Man may have their Company, or lay them aſide at pleaſure, without Offence. Notwithſtanding, I muſt needs acknowledge, I preferr the Company of a good Neighbour before them; and particularly am well ſatisfied that I cannot ſpend this Evening better than in your Converſation, and I am confident I ſhall ſleep well at night, if, firſt ſome friendly Offices paſs between us.

Phil.

Phil. You doubly oblige me, good *Sebaſtian*, firſt in your great condeſcenſion to make me this kind viſit, and then in forſaking ſo good Company for mine.

Sebaſt. Your great Courteſie, *Philander*, interprets that to be an Obligation upon your ſelf, which is but Self-love in me: for truly I am ſenſible that ſo great a part of the comfort of Life depends upon a Man's good Correſpondence with thoſe that are near about him, that I think I cannot love my ſelf unleſs I love my Neighbour alſo. And now, Sir, if you pleaſe, let us upon this occaſion improve our Neighbourhood to a more intimate Friendſhip, ſo that you and I who have hitherto lived peaceably and inoffenſively by each other, may henceforth become mutually uſeful and ſerviceable to one another.

Phil. O good *Sebaſtian*, you talk of Self-love, but I ſhall be ſo far from it, that I muſt hate my ſelf, and that deſervedly too, if I lay not hold of ſo advantagious a propoſal.

Sebaſt. Dear Neighbour, no Complements, I beſeech you, that will ſpoil our deſign, and continue us Strangers to each other.

Phil. If I were uſed to Complement, yet I ſhould be aſhamed to make ſo ſuperficial a return to an overture of ſo much kindneſs and reality; but I am plain and hearty, and heartily I imbrace both your ſelf and your motion.

Maid, make us a good Fire.

Come, Sir, what will you drink?

Sebaſt. All in good time, Sir.

Phil. Nay, never in better time; now is the ſeaſon of drinking; we muſt imitate the Plants, and now ſuck in ſapp to ſerve us all the Year after: if you will flouriſh in the Spring, you

muſt take in good Juices in the Winter.

Sebaſt. You ſeem, *Philander*, to dream of a dry Summer, however I'll pledge you, for I am ſure the Winter is Cold.

Phil. Well, Sir, here is that will abate the edge of the Weather, be it as ſharp as it can. This Drink will make the Evenings warm, and the Nights ſhort in ſpight of the Seaſon.

Sebaſt. That would be a pleaſant Experiment, but have you tryed it?

Phil. Yes very often, *probatum eſt*; but then you muſt take the full doſe. Come fear it not, this will breed good Blood, cure Malancholy, and is the only Cement of good Neighbourhood.

The tipling Humour of the age expoſed.

Sebaſt. Why then I hope our Friendſhip will be laſting, for the Cement (as you call it) is ſtrong.

Phil. You are pleaſant, *Sebaſtian*: but now that you and I are together; and under the Roſe too (as they ſay) why ſhould not we drink ſomewhat briskly? we ſhall know one another and love one another the better ever after. For, let me tell you, this will open our Hearts, and turn our very inſides outward.

Sebaſt. That Trick, *Philander*, I confeſs I have ſeen plaid, but I thought it a very unſeemly one.

Phil. I doubt you miſtake me, I mean only that a liberal Glaſs will take off all reſervedneſs in our Converſation.

Sebaſt. I underſtand you, good Neighbour, but with your Pardon, I muſt needs tell you, that I have never been able to obſerve the Glaſs you ſpeak of, to be ſo exact a mirrour of Minds, but

but as often to disfigure and disguise Men, as truly to represent them. Have you not found some Men, who upon an infusion in strong Liquor, have seemed for the present to be totally dissolved into Kindness and good Nature; and yet as soon as ever the drink is squeezed out of these Sponges, they become again as dry, as hard, and as rough as a Pumice, and as intractable as ever. Others you shall observe to Hector and Swagger in their drink, as if they were of the highest Mettle and most redoubted Courage, who Spirits nevertheless evaporating with their Wine, they prove as tame errand Cowards as any are in Nature. Perhaps also you may have taken notice of a maudlin kind of Soakers, who commonly relent when they are well moistned, as if they shrunk in the wetting; and will at such times seem to be very Devout and Religious, and yet for all this they continue as Sottish as ever, as impenitent as a weeping Wall, and as insensible as the groaning Plank. Contrariwise there are some men, who in the general Habit of their Lives, appear to be very discreet and ingenuous persons; yet if contrary to their Custom, they have the misfortune to be surprized with drink, they become as dull as Dormice, as flat and insipid as Pompions.

I cannot think therefore that this Drink Ordeal is so infallible a test of Mens Tempers as you imagine; or if it were, yet there is no need of it between you and me: we can candidly and sincerely lay open our Bosoms to each other, without having a Confession of our Sentiments forced from us, by this new fashioned Dutch Torture.

Phil. I must needs confess, *Sebastian*, that you

raillé at Tipling with ſo good a Grace, that I cannot be ſorry I gave you the occaſion: but ſtill I doubt you miſtake me, I am not for ſcandalous and debauched Drinking, but in a civil way between Friends, to make our Spirits light, and our Hearts chearful.

Sebaſt. And, good *Philander*, do not miſtake me, I am not of that moroſe Humour to condemn all Chearfulneſs; neither do I take upon me to preſcribe to every Man his juſt Doſe, or think a Man muſt divide by an Hair, or be intemperate. I account good Wine as neceſſary as good Meat, and in ſome Caſes more neceſſary: Neither do I doubt but a Man may make uſe of it with a good deal of prudent Liberty; for I do not look upon the Fruit of the Vine, as the forbidden Fruit, or think ſo hardly of God Almighty, as if he gave us ſo good a Creature only to tempt and inſnare us. Yet on the other ſide, I am perſwaded, that a Man may love his Houſe, though he doth not ride upon the ridge of it; and can by no means be of their Opinion, who fanſie there is no Freedom but in a Debauch, no Sincerity without a Surfeit, or no Chearfulneſs whilſt men are in their right Wits. And I look upon the very conceit of this as reproachful both to God an Man, but the practice of it I am ſure is the bane of all manly Converſation.

Phil. I have known ſome Men oppoſe one Vice with another as bad or worſe; and who whilſt the railed at drinking, have, in effect, only made Apoliges for ill Nature: but you, *Sebaſtian*, though you ſpeak ſome very ſevere Things, yet attemper them with ſo much Humanity, that I feel a kind of Pleaſure, even then when you touch me to the quick; therefore you

that

that have ſo much good nature your ſelf, will, I preſume, make ſome allowances to Complaiſance in others.

Sebaſt. Far be it from me to undervalue good Nature, which I have in ſo great eſteem, that I ſcarcely think any thing is good without it; It is the very air of a good Mind, the ſign of a large and generous Soul, and the peculiar Soil on which Virtue proſpers. And as for that genuine Fruit of it Complaiſance, I take it (if it be rightly underſtood) to be that which above all things renders a Man both amiable and uſeful in the World, and which as well ſweetens as facilitates Converſation; but the miſchief is (as it generally happens to all excellent things) there is a Counterfeit which (aſſuming the name) paſſes current for it in the World, by which men become impotant and incapable of withſtanding any Importunities, be they never ſo unreaſonable, or reſiſting any Temptations be they never ſo dangerous; but as if they were cripled in their Powers, or crazed in their Minds, are wholly governed by Example, and ſneakingly conform themſelves to other Mens Humours and Vices; and in a word, become every Man's Fool that hath the confidence to impoſe upon them. Now this is ſo far from that lovely maſculine Temper of true Complaiſance, that it is indeed no better than a childiſh Baſefulneſs, a feeble Puſillanimity, and ſilly ſoftneſs of Mind, which makes a Man firſt the Slave and Property, and then at laſt the Scorn of his Company. Wherefore it is the part of a Good-natured Man, neither ſo rigidly to inſiſt upon the punctilio's of his Liberty or Property, as to refuſe a Glaſs re-

Of good Nature and Complaiſance.

commended to him by civility; nor yet on the other side, to be either Hectored or Wheedled out of his Christian Name (as we say) and Sheepishly submit himself to be taxed in his Drink, or other indiffrent Things at other Mens Pleasure. And if he shall fall into the Company of those, who shall assume to themselves such an Arbitrary Power, as to assess him at their own rate, and prescribe their measures to him; I do not doubt but that with a *salvo* both to good Nature and Civily, he may and ought so far to assert his own Dominion over himself, as with a generous disdain to reject the Imposition, and look upon the Imposers as equally Tyrannical, and impertinent with those who would prescribe to me to eat their proportions of Meat, or to wear my Clothes just of their size.

Phil. O Sir, your Discourse is brave and wise and virtuous, but one thing is wanting to make me your Proselyte; which is, that I doubt it is not practicable; you cannot certainly but be sensible how difficult a thing it is for Modesty and good Nature to oppose the prevailing Humour of the Age, which in plain truth is such, that now a-days a Man looks very odly that keeps any strict measures of drinking.

Sebast. I am afraid it is too true which you say; and though I have no mind to reproach, or much less quarrel with the Age we live in; yet I confess to you, it is a matter of regret and disdain to me to observe Skil in good Liquors ambitiously pretended to, as if it were a very considerable Point of Knowledge; and good Drinking looked upon as so important an Affair of humane Life, that that time seems to be lost, in which the Glass goes not round, and the Cup

and

and the Bottle ſeem to be the Hour-glaſs or the only meaſure of Time. And this I the more wonder at, becauſe the Air, the Climate, the Conſtitutions of Mens Bodies are not changed, and the Laws of Temperance are the ſame they were wont to be: and beſides all this, I do ingenuouſly acknowledg the Age to be extraordinarily polite and ingenuous; I would therefore very fain know, but have not hitherto been able to ſatisfie my ſelf, from what cauſes this change of Mens Manners in this particular hath ariſen, and what hath brought this tipling Humour into Faiſhon.

Apologies for Tipling baffled.

Phil. You need not ask my Opinion, for you have anſwered your ſelf; it is a Faſhion, and that you know is changable without obſervable cauſes; but becauſe, perhaps you think my unhappy Experience may inable me to ſay ſomething in the Caſe, I will tell you; Faſhions, you know are commonly taken up for diſtinction ſake; for Men do not love to appear in the Garb of thoſe whom they hate or deſpiſe. Now there are a melancholy ſort of People amongſt us, that are wonderfully preciſe in their way; Men of a kind of Leſſian Conſcience, that pretend to do all things by meaſure, and indeed weigh every thing by ſcruples, and conſequently (whatever they are towards themſelves) are very ſevere in their cenſures of other Men; inſomuch, that whatſoever is not juſt after their Mode and Humour, eſpecially if it look never ſo little aiery and light, they preſently damn it as flat immorality and debauchery. Theſe Men (however ſome of them may be well-meaning and pitiable)

pitiable) you will eaſily grant muſt needs be very troubleſome in the World. But then there is another ſort of men, who being of a more ſanguine and cheerful Temper, are not ſo ſtrait-laced in their Principles, and conſequently are apt to indulge themſelves a far greater Liberty of Converſation; and in deteſtation of the former, whom they obſerve to be often abſurd and unreaſonable, but always hide-bound and phantaſtical, do (as it is too uſual in ſuch caſes) run out upon ſome extremity on the other ſide; and ſo in ſhort, it ſeems to me that unneceſſary ſcrupuloſity hath given occaſion and countenance to its direct contrary; and thus that Tipling humour, as you call it, hath become the prevailing faſhion.

Sebaſt. In truth, *Philander*, the account you have given is ingenious, and not improbable: But, Lord, what a miſery is it that men muſt always be upon extreams! is there no middle? cannot men be merry and wiſe too? is there any neceſſity that every man muſt be intoxicated one way or other? if one ſort be ſilly, muſt the other be mad? or if they be mad, muſt theſe be drunk? For my part, I cannot tell whether to call this Diſtinction (as you do) or Imitation, or Infection, or Faſcination, or what you will, but ſure I am, they are both very vitious and abſurd.

Phil. Nay, *Sebaſtian*, I will not take upon me altogether to juſtify the Practice of the one more than the other; but now I am in, I will (with your leave) give you notice of another thing, that is thought to have a conſiderable ſtroke in this buſineſs, and may in ſome meaſure mitigate your cenſure of the Good-Fellows.

It

It is the Obſervation of wiſe Men, that generally the Cuſtoms of People were taken up at firſt upon the Account of ſome natural neceſſity or defect (as we ſee generally Art ſupplies and perfects Nature.) Now you know we live in a cold Climate, and conſequently muſt needs have dull flegmatick Bodies, the influence of which upon our Minds is eaſily diſcernable (amongſt other inſtances) by that extreme Modeſty and baſhfulneſs, which is almoſt equally common to us all, and peculiar to all that are of this Country, and which ordinarily Tongue-ties us in all good Company, until Wine have warmed us, and diſſolved that ligament; ſo that it ſhould ſeem that drinking is not altogether blame-worthy, as being more neceſſary to us than to moſt other People, if it were but to make us ſprightly and converſable: for as on the one ſide, you cannot expect that all Men ſhould be able to converſe together like a company of dry Philoſophers; ſo on the other, I know you would not have Engliſhmen, when they are in Company, hold a ſilent Quakerly Meeting.

Sebaſt. Now, *Philander*, you have mended the matter finely; to avoid my cenſure of the Good-Fellows (as you call them) you have cenſured the whole Nation as a Generation of dull Sotts: and repreſented your Countrymen as a ſort of People newly faſhioned out of Clay, and juſt able to ſtand upright, but into whom God Almightly hath put no Soul at all, but left that to be extracted out of the Spirit of Wine, by which means, when we have attained it (and not till then, it ſeems) we may become like other Folks. But in the mean time, I wonder what became of all our ſober Anceſtors, and particularly

larly of the dry Race of Queen *Elizabeth*-men (as they are called) I cannot find but they had as much Soul and Spirit as the preſent Generation (however they came by it) though they never made Alembicks of themſelves. But in earneſt, *Philander*, I will confeſs ingenuouſly to you, that as for ſuch a dull ſort of earthly Men as you ſpeak of, I ſhould not be much offended with them, if they now and then got a little Froth into their Heads, to ſupply their defect of Brains; and if upon that occaſion, they grew ſomewhat conceited and impertinent, the matter were not much, though the Metamorphoſis might ſeem ſtrange, for a dull Aſs to become an Ape or a Monkey: But then for the ſame reaſon, the finer Wits (and ſurely ſome ſuch there be) ſhould let it alone; for that rational and ingenuous Men ſhould by this Cup of *Circe*, the magical Power of Wine, be transformed into ſuch kind of Animals, methinks it is a thouſand pities. But why do you ſmile, *Philander?*

Phil. Even at my ſelf, good *Sebaſtian*, or at leaſt at that Picture you have drawn for me; it would look a little ambitiouſly, if I ſhould compare my ſelf to the Land of *Egypt*, which, they ſay, was fruitful in proportion to its being overflown; but in plain truth, I am ſuch a ſpot of Earth, as will bear nothing unleſs it be well watered; and to countenance my ſelf in this condition, though I cannot pretend to Learning, yet I remember I have heard that the graveſt Philoſophers did uſe to water their Plants (as we ſay) and ſometimes Philoſophized over a Glaſs of Wine.

Sebaſt. And why not over a Glaſs of Wine, as well as by a Fire-ſide? provided a Man take care,

care, that as by the one he does not burn his Shins, ſo by the other he doth not over-heat his Head; or to follow your Metaphor, provided a man only water the Soil, and do not drown it. You know it is only Extreams that I find fault with, when Men will be always ſipping and dabling, as if their Bodies were nothing but Pipes made on purpoſe to tranſmit Liquors through; or as if they had their Life and Soul transfus'd into them from the Hogſhead.

Phil. Well, Sir, I perceive I am likely to get nothing by my fine figure; I will therefore ſay no more of my ſelf; but I have heard ſome others ſay, they have always found their reaſon to be ſtrongeſt, when their Spirits were moſt exalted.

Sebaſt. But ſure they did not mean that their Reaſon was ſtrongeſt, when the Wine was too ſtrong for them? if they did, then either their Reaſon was very ſmall at the beſt, and nothing ſo ſtrong as their Drink, or elſe we are quite miſtaken in the names of things; and ſo in plain Engliſh, Drunkenneſs is Sobriety, and Sobriety Drunkenneſs: For who can imagine that that which clouds the Head, ſhould enlighten the Mind; and that which wildly agitates the Spirits, ſhould ſtrengthen the Underſtanding; or that a coherent thred of Diſcourſe, ſhould be ſpun by a ſhattered virtiginous brain? it is poſſible ſome odd Crotchets and Whimſeys may at ſuch times be raiſed together with the Fumes; or it is not unlikely, but that a man may then ſeem wondrous wiſe in his own Eyes, when he ſhall appear very ſilly and ridiculous to all others that are not in the ſame condition with himſelf; but to go about to make any thing

better

better of it, is a kind of liquid Enthuſiaſm. And that this is no wild conjecture or uncharitable Opinion of mine, I appeal to this Experiment; tell me, good *Philander*, what is the Reaſon that Men in thoſe Jollities (we ſpeak of) cannot endure the company of thoſe that will not take their ſhare with them, but are moſt pleaſed with ſuch as will rather exceed their meaſure, and take off their Cups roundly; is it think you out of deſire that ſuch Men ſhould be wiſer than themſelves, or the quite contrary? or what is the Reaſon that Men of this Practice are very ſhy of thoſe Perſons that will remember and repeat afterwards the Paſſages in thoſe merry Aſſignations? I make no doubt, but when you have conſidered the Caſe, you will find this to lie at the bottom, namely, that even ſuch Perſons are ſenſible that ſeveral things paſs amongſt them at ſuch times for Wit and good Humour, which when the hear of again, and reflect upon in their ſober Intervals, they are heartily aſhamed of, as apiſh and ridiculous Fooleries.

But now, if (after all) I ſhould grant you (which I do not unwillingly) that Men well whetted with Wine (as they love to ſpeak) are very ſharp and piquant, very jocoſe and ready at a repartée, or ſuch like; yet beſides that this edge is ſo thin and Razor-like, that it will ſerve to no manly purpoſes; yet it is alſo very dangerous, ſince at that time a wiſe Man hath it not in keeping.

Phil. Well, I perceive hitherto the edge of my Arguments turns at the force of your Replies; therefore I had beſt contend no longer with you on that point, whither Wine raiſes Mens parts

or

or no: But one thing I have yet to ſay, which I am ſure you muſt and will grant me, *viz.* that it ſuppreſſes Cares and Melancholy, and makes a Man forget his Sorrows (that great Diſeaſe of humane Life) and this I ſuppoſe ſufficiently commends the liberal uſe of it.

Sebaſt. That which you now ſay is undeniably true; and no queſtion, for this very end was the juice of the Grape principally ordained by the great Creator of the World; but yet I know not how it homes to paſs, that this remedy is ſeldomeſt made uſe of, by thoſe to whom it was peculiarly preſcribed; I mean, the melancholy and dejected have ordinarily the leaſt ſhare of it; but it is very commonly taken by the proſperous, the ſanguine and debonair, and ſuch as have leaſt need of it; and theſe frequently take it in ſuch large proportions, that it makes them not only forget their Sorrows (if they had any) but themſelves and their buſineſs too. So that upon the whole matter, I ſee no tolerable account can be given of the way of drinking now in faſhion; for it appears to have been taken up upon no neceſſity; it is recommended by no real advantage, either to the Body or Mind, and therefore muſt owe its riſe to no better cauſes than dulneſs or idleneſs, a ſilly obſequiouſneſs to other Mens Humours, or Epicuriſm and Wantonneſs of our own Inclination. And for the Habit of it, it is no better than a lewd Artifice to avoid thinking, a way for a Man to get ſhut of himſelf and of all ſober Conſiderations.

The real cauſes of Tipling intimated, and the miſchiefs of it exaggerated.

It fills Men with more Spirits than it leaves them able to Govern; from whence they become great

great Talkers, proud Boaſter, capricious, inſolent and quarrelſom. For it ſo much dilates and rarifies the Spirits, that they cannot bear up a weighty thought; and while ſuch as thoſe are ſunk and drowned, nothing but the mere froth and folly of Mens Hearts bubbles up in their Converſation. And this inſenſibly growing upon men, by degrees introduces an habitual vanity and impertinence, below the gravity and dignity of humane Nature; and by means of which, ſuch men become fit only for Toys and Trifles, for apiſh Tricks and buffoonly Diſcourſe; which in concluſion, do ſo far degrade a man below his quality, that he becomes not only a ſhame to himſelf and his Family, but the contempt of his very Servants and Dependents.

And touching this laſt, have you not ſometime obſerved, what dry Bobs, and ſarcaſtical Jeers the moſt underling Fellows will now and then beſtow upon their Betters, when they have found them faultering in this kind: *Was not Maſter ſuch a one cruelly cut laſt night?* ſays one. *How like a drowned Rat was Maſter ſuch a one?* ſays another. *How wiſely our Maſter looks when he hath got his doſe?* ſaith a third.

Shall I need after all this, to repreſent the Sin committed againſt God Almighty, by this vain Cuſtom, in the breach of his Laws, deforming his Image, and quenching his Spirit; or the injury it doth to humane Society, in the riotous and profuſe expence of ſo comfortable a Cordial and Support of humane Life; or, ſhall I but reckon up the miſchiefs a man hereby incurrs to his own perſon, the danger of his Health, the damage to his Fortunes, the —

Phil. O, no more, no more, good *Sebaſtian*, I am

I am yours, you have ſilenced, you have vanquiſhed me; I am not able to reſiſt the evidence of truth in your Diſcourſe, you have quite marr'd a good Fellow, and ſpoil'd my Drinking.

But how then ſhall I treat you? Come, you are for ſerious Things, what ſay you to a Game at Tables? Methinks that is both a grave and a pleaſant entertainment of the time.

Sebaſt. Truly, Sir, I am ſo unskilful at that and moſt other Games, that I ſhould rather give you trouble than diverſion at it. But what need you be ſollicitous for my Entertainment? It is your Company only which I deſire. And methinks it looks as if Friends were weary one of the other, when they fall to Gaming.

Of Gaming, and particularly of Chance Games.

Phil. But I ſhould think a Man of your temper might have a phancy for this Game, as upon other reſpects, ſo eſpecially becauſe it ſeems to be a pretty Emblem of the World.

Sebaſt. As how, I pray you, Sir?

Phil. Why, in the firſt place, the caſual agitation of the Dice in the Box, which unaccountably produceth ſuch or ſuch a Lott, ſeems to me to repreſent the Diſpoſal of that Inviſible Hand which orders the Fortunes of Men. And then the dexterous management of that Lott or Caſt by the Gameſter plainly reſembles the uſe and efficacy of humane prudence and induſtry in the Conduct of a Man's own Fortunes.

Sebaſt. I perceive, *Philander*, that you play like a Philoſopher as well as a Gameſter; but in my opinion you have forgotten the main re-

ſemblance of all, which is, That the Clatter and Noiſe in toſſing and tumbling the Dice and Table-men up and down, backward and forward, lively deſcribes the hurry and tumult of this World, where one Man goes up, another tumbles down; one is dignified and preferred, another is degraded; that Man reigns and triumphs, this Mans frets and vexes; the one laughs, the other repines; and all the reſt tug and ſcuffle to make their advantage of one another. Let this, if you pleaſe, be added to the Moral of your Game. But when all is done, I muſt tell you, for my part I am not ſo much taken with the Original, as to be fond of the Type or Effigies; I mean, I am not ſo in love with the World, as to take any great delight in ſeeing it brought upon the Stage, and acted over again: But had much rather retreat from it, when I can, and give my ſelf the contentment of repoſe, and quiet thoughts.

Phil. However, I hope you are not offended at my mention of that Game. You do not think it unlawful to uſe ſuch Diverſion?

Sebaſt. No, Dear *Phil.* I am not of that auſtere Humour to forbid delightful Exerciſes; for I am ſenſible, that whilſt Men dwell in Bodies, it is fit they not only keep them up in neceſſary reparation by meat and drink, but alſo make them as lightſome and cheerful as they can, otherwiſe the Mind will have but an uncomfortable Tenancy. The Animal Life, I ſay, muſt be conſidered as well as the Intellectual, and our Spirits have need to be relaxed ſometimes, leſt the keeping them continually intent weaken and infeeble them ſo, that they cannot ſerve us in greater purpoſes; I would therefore as

ſoon

ſoon univerſally forbid all Phyſick, as all kind of Exerciſe and Diverſion, and indeed rather of the two, for I think the latter may in a great meaſure ſave the trouble of the former, but that will do little or good without this.

Neither do I think even thoſe Games of Chance abſolutely unlawful; I have ſometimes made uſe of this in particular which you mention, or the like to it, upon ſome occaſions: As for inſtance, when I took Phyſick, and could neither be allowed to walk abroad, nor to be ſerious and thoughtful within doors; I have ſupplied both for that time, with a Game at Tables. Or, it may be, when I have happened to be engaged in ſome kind of Company, I have play'd, not ſo much to divert my ſelf with the Game, as to divert the Company from ſomething that was worſe. But to deal freely with you: Though I do not altogether condemn, yet I cannot very much commend theſe kind of Sports; for indeed I ſcarce think them Sports, they are rather a Counterfeit kind of Buſineſs, and wearies ones head as much as real ſtudy and buſineſs of importance. So that in the uſe of them a Man only puts a cheat upon himſelf and tickles himſelf to death; for by applying himſelf for delight to theſe buſie and thoughtful Games, he becomes like a Candle lighted at both ends, and muſt needs be quickly waſted away between jeſt and earneſt, when as both his Cares and his Delights prey upon him.

Beſides, I obſerve, that Diverſions of this nature having ſo much of Chance and Surprize in them, do generally two much raiſe the paſſions of Men, which it were fitter by all Arts and Endeavours to charm down and ſuppreſs. For to

ſay nothing of the uſual accidents of common Gaming Houſes, which (as I have heard from thoſe that knew too well) are the moſt lively Pictures of Hell upon Earth, and where it is ordinary for Men to rave, ſwear, curſe and blaſpheme, as if the Devil was indeed amongſt them, or the Men were transformed into Infernal Spirits; I have ſeen ſaid Examples of Extravagance in the more modeſt and private, but over-eager purſuits of theſe Recreations: inſomuch, that ſometimes a well-tempered perſon hath quite loſt all command of himſelf at them. So that you might ſee his Eyes fiery, his Colour inflamed, his Hands to tremble, his Breath to be ſhort, his Accents of Speech fierce and violent; by all which and abundance more ill-favoured Symptoms, you might conclude his Heart to be hot, and his Thoughts ſollicitous, and indeed the whole Man, Body and Soul, to be in an Agony. Now will you call this a Recreation, or a Rack and Torture rather? A Rack certainly; which makes a Man betray thoſe Follies which every wiſe Man ſeeks to conceal, and heightens thoſe Paſſions which every good Man endeavours to ſubdue.

And, which is yet worſe (as I was ſaying) this courſe looks like the accuſtoming of the Beaſt to be rampant, and to run without the Rein. For by indulging our Paſſions in jeſt we get an habit of them in earneſt, and accordingly ſhall find our ſelves to be enclined to be wrathful, peeviſh and clamorous, when we apply our ſelves to buſineſs, or more grave converſation.

To all which add, That Gaming (and eſpecially at ſuch Games as we are ſpeaking of) doth inſenſibly ſteal away too much of our time from

from better buſineſs, and tempts us to be Prodigals and Bankrupts of that which no good Fortune can ever redeem or repair. And this is ſo notoriouſly true, that there is hardly any Man who ſets himſelf down to theſe Paſtimes (as they are called) that can break off and recal himſelf when he deſigned ſo to do. Foraſmuch as either by the too great intention of his Mind, he forgets himſelf; or the anger ſtirred up by his misfortunes, and the indignation to go off baffled, ſuffers him not to think of any thing but revenge, and reparation of his Loſſes, or the hopes he is fed withal trolls him on, or ſome witchery or other tranſports him ſo beſides his firſt reſolutions, that Buſineſs, Health, Family, Friends, and even the Worſhip of God it ſelf, are all ſuperſeded and neglected for the ſake of this paltry Game.

All which conſidered, I am really afraid there is more of the Devil in it than we are ordinarily aware of, and that it is a temptation of his to engage us in that, where he that wins moſt is ſure to loſe that which is infinitely of more value. Therefore upon the whole matter I think it much ſafer to keep out of the Liſts than to engage, where beſides the greatneſs of the ſtake a Man cannot bring himſelf off again without ſo great difficulty.

Pardon me, Dear *Philander*, if my zeal or indignation (or what you will call it) hath tranſported me in this particular; ſure I am I have no intention to reproach your practice, nor to affront you for your motioning this ſport to me, but ſpeak out of hearty good will, and to give you caution.

Phil. O *Sebaſtian*! I love you dearly, and

thank you heartily for the freedom you have uſed with me. We good-natur'd Men (as the World flatters us, and we love to be ſtiled) conſidering little or nothing our ſelves, and having ſeldom the Happineſs of diſcreet and faithful Friends that will have ſo much concern for us as to admoniſh us of our imprudences and our dangers, as if we were mere Machines, move juſt as other Men move and prompt us, and ſo Drink, Play, and do a thouſand Follies for Company ſake, and under the continuance of one anothers Example: God forgive me; I have too often been an inſtance of that which you now intimated: I therefore again and again thank you for your advice, and hope I ſhall remember as long as I live what you have ſaid on this occaſion.

But that you may work a perfect Cure upon me, I will be ſo true to my ſelf as to acquaint you faithfully with what I apprehend to be the Cauſe of this Epidemical Diſtemper. I find the common and moſt irreſiſtible Temptation both to Drinking and Gaming, is the unskilfulneſs of ſuch Men as my ſelf to employ our time without ſuch kind of Diverſions, eſpecially at this Seaſon of the Year when the dark and long Evenings, foul Ways and ſharp Weather, drive us into Clubs and Combinations. If therefore you will deal freely and friendly with me herein, and by your prudence help me over this difficulty, you will exceedingly oblige me, and do an act worthy of your ſelf, and of that kindneſs which brought you hither.

Want of buſineſs the occaſion of Drinking and Gaming.

Sebaſt. There is nothing, Dear *Phil.* within my

my power which you may not commend me in. Nor is there any thing wherein I had rather ſerve you (if I could) than in a buſineſs of this nature. But all I can do, and as I think all that is needful in this Caſe, is to deſire you to conſider on it again, and then I hope you will find the difficulty not ſo inſuperable as you imagine. It is very true, Idleneſs is more painful than hard Labour, and nothing is more wearisome than having nothing to do: Beſides, as a rich Soil will be ſure to bring forth Weeds, if it be not ſowed with more profitable Seed; ſo the active Spirits in Man will be ſure to prompt him to evil, if they be not employed in doing good. For the Mind can no more bear a perfect ceſſation and intermiſſion, than the World a *Vacuum*.

But this difficulty which you repreſent, generally preſſes young Men only: Theſe indeed having more Sail than Balaſt; I mean, having a mighty vigour and abundance of Spirits, but not their Minds furniſhed with a ſufficient ſtock of Knowledge and Experience to govern and employ thoſe active Spirits upon; no wonder if ſuch perſons, rather than do juſt nothing, and in defect of real Buſineſs, do gredily catch at thoſe ſhadows and reſemblances of it, (as I remember you ingeniouſly called Drinking and Gaming.) Beſides, theſe ſort of Perſons ſeeming to themſelves to have a great deal of time before them, are eaſily drawn to ſpend it the more laviſhly, as out of an unmeaſurable Store. But what is all this to Men that are entred into real buſineſs, and have concerns under their hand, and the luxuriancy of whoſe Spirits is taken off by Cares and Experience, and eſpecially who

cannot (without unpardonable ſtupidity) but be ſenſible how daily the time and Age of Man wears away. Now I ſay why time ſhould be ſo burthenſome to ſuch as theſe, or what ſhould betray them to ſuch infrugal Expences of it, I profeſs, for my part, I can give no account, without making ſevere reflections on their diſcretion.

Phil. Aſſign what cauſes of it you can, or make what reflections upon it you pleaſe, however the matter of fact is certainly true in the general, That a Gentleman's time is his burden, (whether he be young or old) and the want of Employment for it, his great temptation to ſeveral Extravagances.

Sebaſt. I muſt believe it to be as you ſay, becauſe you know the World better than I do, and I am confident you will not miſreport it. But really, *Phil.* it is very ſtrange it ſhould be ſo; and I am ſure cannot be verified without very ingrateful returns to the Divine Bounty, which hath made ſo liberal and ample proviſions for the delight and contentment of ſuch perſons far above the rate of others. It is true, they have leſs bodily labour, and no drugery, to exhauſt their Time and Spirits upon (and that methinks ſhould be no grievance) but then the prudent management of a plentiful Fortune, (if things be rightly conſidered) doth not take up much leſs time than the poor Man's labour for neceſſities of Life. For what with ſecuring the Patrimony and Huſbanding the Revenue, what with letting and ſetting his Lands, and building and repairing his Houſes, what with planting Walks, and beautifying

A Gentleman's Life as buſie as other Mens.

fying his Gardens, what with accommodating himself according to his Quality, and hospitably treating his Friends and Neighbours according to theirs; and, to say no more, what with keeping Accounts of all this, and governing a numerous and well-fed Family, I am of opinion, that (all this taken together) the Gentleman hath indeed the more pleasant, but a no less busie Employment of his time than other Men: Insomuch that I cannot but suspect that he must be deficient in some principal Branch of good Husbandry, and defrauds his business that surfeits on leisure.

Moreover, as Divine Bounty hath exempted such Men as we speak of from the common sweat and anxiety of Life, by those large Patrimonies his Providence and the care of Parents hath provided to their hands; so the same Divine Majesty hath thereby obliged them, and it is accordingly expected from them by the World, that they be more publickly serviceable to their Prince and Country, in Magistracy, in making Peace, and several ways assisting Government, and promoting the ends of humane Society: upon which account, as it is very unjust that others should envy and malign them for their enjoyments, so it is apparent also, that they are so far from having less to do than their Inferiors, that on the contrary the Gentleman's Life seems to be far the busier of the two.

Besides all this, Gentlemen having usually more ingenuous Education, and consequently are presumed to have more exercised and improved Minds, may therefore be able to employ themselves, if all other business ceased, and fill up the vacant spaces of their time with such

ſuch delightful and profitable Entertainments as others are incapable of.

Phil. That, Sir, that laſt Point is the thing I would fain learn, namely, how to fill up the vacant ſpaces of Life (as you call it) ſo as to leave no room for temptation to Debauchery.

Sebaſt. I am heartily glad to ſee you of that Mind; but I aſſure my ſelf there is nothing I can ſay to it, but what your own diſcretion will prevent me in. However, if it be your deſire that I ſhould enlighten your thoughts by opening of my own, we will then, if you pleaſe, examine this matter between us, and by that time we have compared the Period of our Lives with the variety of buſineſs that occurrs in it, I am out of all doubt that you will be then throughly ſatisfied that we have neither ſo much time as to be a burden to us, nor if it were more than it is, ſhould we be at a loſs for the beſtowing of it. And this, without reſorting to any of the Extravagances afore-mentioned.

An eſtimate or account of the time and buſineſs of Man's Life.

Let us then in the firſt place ſuppoſe that the Lives of Men at this Age of the World, and particularly in this Climate and Country, amount commonly to ſeventy Years; for though it is poſſible here and there one out-lives that term, yet it is pretty evident by the moſt probable Calculations, that there is not above one Man in thirty or thereabouts that arrives at that Age: However, I ſay, let us at preſent, ſuppoſe that to be the common Standard.

Now to diſcover what an inconſiderable duration this is, let us but ask the opinion of thoſe that have arrived at it, and they will aſſuredly tell

tell us, that all that whole term when it is paſt ſeems to be a very ſhort ſtage, and quickly run over; or if we had rather truſt to our own experience, let us look back upon twenty or thirty years of our own Lives, which though it bear a very great proportion towards the Leaſe of our whole Lives, yet when it is over ſeems to be but a little while to us, and that Time, as it is uſually pictured, fled upon Wings——

Phil. I pray pardon me, if I a little interrupt the thred of your Diſcourſe; you may eaſily continue it again, and for failing I will remember where you left off. That which I would ſay by the way is this, I can verifie the truth of what you were ſuppoſing, by my own Experience, and have often wondred what ſhould be the reaſon of it, that Men have quite different apprehenſions of time paſt and time to come. When we look back (as you well obſerve) upon twenty or thirty years which are gone, they ſeem but a trice to us; but if we look forward, and forethink of ſo many years to come, we are apt to fanſie we have an Ocean before us, and ſuch a vaſt proſpect that we can ſee no end of it. Now I ask your Opinion what it is that puts ſuch a fallacy upon us, for other it cannot be; foraſmuch as the ſame term of years, whether it be reckoned forward or backward, paſt or to come, muſt needs really be of the ſame length and duration.

Sebaſt. It is verily ſo as you ſay, and the Obſervation is very ingenuous and pertinent to the buſineſs in hand. But to give you an account of the reaſon of that different eſtimate, I can ſay but theſe two things, *viz.* Either as it is in the

the nature of hope to flatter us, ſo all things ſeem bigger at a diſtance, and whilſt they are in expectation only, than what we can find them to be in fruition. Or elſe it muſt be, that what is paſt of our lives we have freſh and lively remarks upon, by remembring the notable paſſages that have fallen out within that compaſs, by which means thoſe equally remote portions of time are brought near to our eye.

But on the contrary in the time which is to come, we can have no remarks upon it; becauſe not knowing what ſhall happen, we have nothing to fix our Thoughts upon, and ſo it looks like a vaſt Ocean to us. For you know that things which are in confuſion ſeem to be more than the ſame things when they are digeſted into juſt order and method. And in travelling, you obſerve that twenty or thirty Miles which we are well acquainted with, and have frequently traced, ſeem ſhort and inconſiderable; but the ſame length of Journey in an unknown Way, ſeems very tedious and formidable to us. Thus I think it is in the Caſe you have propounded; but now, if you pleaſe, let us paſs on where we were going.

I ſay then, ſuppoſe the term of our lives be eſtimated at the duration of about ſeventy years, yet in the firſt place we muſt ſubduct from this Summ a very conſiderable part as taken up in Childhood and Youth, and which ſlips away we know not how, ſo as to eſcape our obſervation, being wholly ſpent in folly and impertinency, but certainly loſt to all manly purpoſes: to which if you add the infirmities of Old Age, which (though it do not equally

A Practical Demonſtration of the littleneſs of our ſpare time.

equally in all Men, yet) always more or leſs renders ſome part of our time uſeleſs; you will think it no unreaſonable *Poſtulatum* if I ſuppoſe that both together take up a third part of the whole.

Then in the next place let us conſider how great a proportion is taken up in ſleep, in eating and drinking, in dreſſing and undreſſing, in trimming and adorning, and, to be ſhort, in the mere neceſſity of the Body. I have read of a brave *Saxon* Prince of this our Native Country, who allowed only eight hours in the Day, or one third part of his time, to theſe uſes; but I doubt few mean Men follow his Example: and if we take meaſures from common experience, we ſhall find that theſe meaner Offices take up near, if not altogether half the time of moſt perſons. And ſo another third of the whole is gone, and only one poor third remaining for all other occaſions.

Then again, out of that remainder a very great ſhare will be challenged by neceſſary buſineſs, the Affairs of our Eſtate or Calling, and the concerns of our Families; and theſe occaſions are ſo importunate that they will not be denied without culpable ill Husbandry, nor gratified without a large proportion of the aforeſaid remainder.

Moreover, whether we will or no, another part will be raviſhed from us by Sickneſs and Phyſick, in Civility and Complement, in Viſiting and being Viſited, in Journies and News, and a thouſand Impertinences; ſo that he muſt be a very good and wary Husband indeed that ſuffers not great Expences this way.

And after all this, here is nothing for reading

ing and Study, for Meditation and the Improvements of our own Minds; nay, not for Religion and Devotion towards God, and the unspeakable Concerns of another World, which in all reason, may most justly put in for their shares.

Phil. all this is very true; but what do you inferr from this Account?

Sebast. I dare trust your Judgment to make Inferences from the Premises: For, in the first place, I know you cannot fail to observe, and that with a just indignation, that the lightest matters of our Life have the greatest share of our time spent in them: Folly and Infirmity, Infancy and Dotage, take up the greatest room of all: then worldly Business and Pleasure exhaust the most of that which is left, and the Mind and noblest Interests have least of all left for them.

And then secondly, you cannot but note with admiration how very little share God Almighty hath even from the very best of Men. And you cannot but adore his Goodness, which rewards with Eternal Life that little time in which Men work in his Vineyard; for whether Men come in at the Eleventh Hour or sooner, it is too plain that scarcely an Eleventh part of our time is spent in his Service. But that which I aim at in this Calculation is to demonstrate to you, that there is a great deal more reason that Men should endeavour rather to redeem Time from lesser occasions than to lavish it in Impertinences, that so our weightier Concerns may have the more tolerable allowances: And to be sure he must be a very soft and feeble Man, that, after all these ends

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are ſerved, can complain that Time lies upon his hands, which was the thing to be proved.

Phil. I am now amazed at my own ſtupidity that could think fit to put ſuch a caſe to you. Lord! what vain Fools are we, that complain of plenty when we are rather ſtraitned and in want? What ſilly Prodigals are we, that are ſo far from ſparing betimes, that we are not ſo much as frugal, when all theſe claims and demands come in ſo thick upon us? I have often heard it ſaid, that by keeping a ſtrict account of Incomes and Expences, a Man might eaſily preſerve an Eſtate from dilapidation; but now I perceive, that for the want of a little of your Arithmetick *to number our days*, we run out our Leaſe of Life before we are aware; and phanſying we have enough to ſquander away upon every trifle, we have ordinarily little or nothing left to defray the moſt weighty occaſions.

And, with your pardon, let me tell you, I think now I have found where the Shoo pinches: It is not (I perceive now) a ſurpluſage of time that tempts us to ſeek out thoſe diverſions aforeſaid; but the mere vanity of our Mind, which hath a fondneſs for them: and then Cuſtom and Example have made them ſo natural and almoſt neceſſary to us that we think the time long till we are at them. Not that we have much to ſpare, for God knows we have little enough; but becauſe we think much of all that which is otherwiſe employed. And this I doubt is the true reaſon why we are impatient of long Prayers, and offended with a long Sermon; which whoſo obſerves, would perhaps charitably ſuppoſe,

pose, that the urgency of Business would not permit us to attend them; but we utterly deprive our selves of that pretence when we complain that time lies upon our hands. To speak truth therefore and shame the Devil and our selves too, We can hardly spare time for God, because we love him too little: but we have abundance of spare time for our idle Diversions, only because we love them too much.

Innocent and pleasant Employments of Time.

Sebast. Dear *Phil.* you have hit the very Mark: But let us go on, and suppose, that our spare time were more than it is or possibly can be (upon the Premises) yet it will be no hard matter to find out more pleasant, as well as more innocent entertainments of it than those now in request.

For in the first place, there are some Employments every whit as delightful as Recreations themselves; such as in particular, Planting and Gardening, in which a Man may not only have the pleasure to contemplate the admirable beauty and variety of the Works of God, but by improving the nature of Plants, by altering the species, by mixture and composition of several beauties and perfections into one, by deducing one out of another, exalting one by another, and in a word, by giving being and continuance to several things, he becomes a kind of Creator himself, if I may without offence use such an expression. This kind of business ministers so many and so ravishing Delights, that I remember *Cato* preferred it before all the Pleasure of Youth, and thought the entertainment of his elder Years herein a good exchange for the voluptuousness of younger Years, which he had now

now loſt all uſe and apprehenſion of; nay, I think *Epicurus* himſelf placed a good part of his Felicity in the delights of his Garden. And above all I am certain that God Almighty who knew beſt what ſatisfactions were to be found within the whole Sphere of his Creation, and was not invidious or niggardly towards Men, made choice of this for the entertainment of our firſt Parents in their ſtate of Innocency, and before their Folly and Sin had damned them to care and toil, and to the ſweat of their Brows.

Again, There are ſome Exerciſes and Recreations both of Body and Mind, which are very ingenuous as well as divertive, ſuch as Singing, Muſick, Painting and the like; in which a Man rather puts a pleaſant deception upon himſelf in point of time, than wholly loſes it. And they are ſo far from debauching his mind or raiſing his paſſions, that they only exalt a Man's phancy, but otherwiſe compoſe his temper even to admiration.

And if you will promiſe not to laugh at my peculiar humour, I will refer another Inſtance to this Head, and tell you, That methinks the playing with a pretty humour'd Child of three or four years old, or more or leſs, is ſcarcely inferior in delightfulneſs to any of the former; where you ſhall obſerve innocency of mind, benignity of temper, ſweet and gentle paſſions, eaſie and unforced mirth, unfeigned love pretty endearments of affection, pleaſant endeavours to ſpeak and expreſs it ſelf, little dawnings of reaſon and phancy, and innumerable other things, which a Man can feel rather than expreſs. I called this my peculiar phancy, but I do not know why it ſhould be peculiar to me;

I ſuppoſe it may be more general, however I confeſs to you I am much the better pleaſed with it, becauſe I find in the Goſpel that our Saviour himſelf was not diſpleaſed with it.

Beſides all theſe, there are ſome Offices of Humanity and Charity which afford a Man unſpeakable delight in the diſcharge of them; ſuch as comforting a Friend or Neighbour in his affliction, or aſſiſting and counſelling him in his difficulties, promoting Peace, and making an end of Controverſies, relieving a poor Man in his hunger, *&c.* In all which, beſides the ſatisfaction a Man hath in his own mind, upon conſideration that he hath done well and worthily, he is alſo ſenſible of a re-action, and as it were by reflection participates of the pleaſure thoſe perſons find by his good Offices towards them. For to ſay nothing of any of the other, what a refreſhment is it to our own Bowels, to obſerve the Appetite and Guſto with which a poor hungry Man feeds upon that which you charitably ſupply him with. And it will do a Man's heart good to take notice of the ſtrange change wrought in ſuch a perſon by a bountiful entertainment, his countenance more cheerful, his ſpirits brisk, his heart light, his whole temper more ſweet and ingenuous; all which who can be acceſſory to without a kind of vertuous Epicuriſm?

All theſe which I have named are ſincere and manly pleaſures, without noiſe and without danger, which neither raiſe a Man's paſſions nor drown his reaſon; they are neither ſo fine and ſpiritual that the Body can have no participation of them, nor ſo groſs and feculent that the mind ſhould be aſhamed of them. And in ſome

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or other of these every Man that pleases may spend his vacant hours with satisfaction.

But let me now go a little higher, and what if we take in somewhat of the other World to sweeten the present Life? What think you, after all, of Prayer to God, and Reading the Scripture, may not a Man bestow some of his time in these with as much pleasure as devotion; and, so (to allude to the Modern Philosophy) fill up the void spaces of his Life with Celestial matter?

Of Prayer, and reading the Scriptures.

As for the former of them, Prayer, I remember you well observed that several of those Men that complain as if they were over-burthened with time, yet love to make as short work with this as they can; wherein they betray either some measure of Atheism in their hearts, or a great deal of sensuality in their Affections: and I cannot tell whether they more contradict themselves, or discover their shameful ignorance of the noblest pleasures of Life. For besides that it is highly agreeable to the best reason of a Man's mind, that he should do all honour to the Divine Majesty, and daily pay his homage to his greatest Benefactor; and nothing sure can be more delightful than the exercise of our highest powers about their proper Object. And besides that, Prayer is the known way to obtain the Divine Blessing, upon which all the pleasure and comfort of our Lives depend, and never fails of success one way or other.

Besides all this, I say, and abundance of other advantages of it, it is the very pulse of the Soul, which keeps the Spirits florid and vi-; it answers to the Motion of the Lungs in

the Body, and exhales those melancholy Vapors that would choke and suffocate our hearts: By it we put our selves under the divine Protection, and our Spirits are heightned and fortified by the Patronage of so high a *Genius*, who can secure us against all assaults and dangers whatsoever. When we have commended our selves to the Divine Providence by Prayer, our hearts are at rest; we are secure sleeping and waking; we are never alone, but have always one to second us; whatever the issue and success of our endeavours be, our minds are quieted; if things answer our wishes, we have a double satisfaction, that God Almighty favours us, as well as that our labours are successful; if things miscarry, we impute no folly, nor omission to our selves, we have done all that was fit for us to do, but it pleased Divine Wisdom to disappoint us. Besides, the frequent approach of the Divine Majesty puts a gravity upon a Man's countenance, checks and keeps down all exorbitancy of passions, begets an ingenuous modesty, and makes Men as well ashamed as afraid to do an unworthy action.

To all which add, That by the advantage of our Prayers we are inabled to become a publick Blessing, and every private Man a Benefactor to the whole World; than which thing what can be either greater in it self, or more acceptable to a great and generous mind? Consequently, what can a brave and publick-spirited Man employ his time in with more delight, than in that which (whatsoever his Fortunes and external Condition be) will make him a Blessing not only to his Friends and Neighbourhood, but to the Country and Times he lives in, that even

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Kings and Princes are really beholden to him. Nor is it neceſſary that much time be taken up herein to ſerve all theſe great ends, nor much leſs is it my intention to commend affectedly long Prayers, a little time and a great deal of heartineſs beſt doth the buſineſs of Religion, and that little ſo employed will make all the reſt paſs away the more ſweetly and comfortably.

And then for Reading and Meditating upon the Holy Scripture, the Pſalmiſt hath told us, that the good and bleſſed Man's *delight is in the Law of God, and* that *therein he meditates day and night.* And ſurely any Man may be able to entertain a few moments in it. If curioſity ſway with us, there are as admirable things in the Holy Scriptures as the mind of Man can deſire; if we affect Hiſtory, we have there the ancienteſt and moſt faithful Monuments in the World; thoſe, without which all Mankind had continued in their Nonage and Childhood to this day, as being ſo far from able to give an account of the beginning of the World and original of things, that they could not have looked backward many Ages, but they would have been utterly bewildered in Miſts and Fables as abſurd as the wildeſt Fictions of Poets. Beſides, without this Record all the wonderful Methods of Divine Providence, (which are the aſſurance and comfort of the preſent Age, and the obligation to Vertue and Foundation of Piety and Religion) had been buried in oblivion.

If we ſeek after Knowledge, either natural, moral or prudential, where is there ſuch another Treaſury of it to be found as this, where we have not only the Relations and Obſervations

of the wiſeſt Men in all Ages paſt, but the diſcoveries of the Divine Majeſty, the depths of infinite Wiſdom (that know the true reaſon of things) laid open.

If we are pleaſed with the foreknowledge of things to come, (as what Man of Soul can chuſe but deſire to ſee beyond the Curtain) then all the Preſages, Prognoſticks and Divinations, all the moſt rational Inductions of the wiſeſt Men, are but ſilly ſurmiſes and idle dreams to the Predictions of the Holy Prophets, which give us light to the Worlds end, and a view of another World; and have both aſſured their own credit, and warranted our belief of what is yet to come by the well known accompliſhment of their former Predictions.

If we would improve our ſelves in Vertue, what ſurer Rule can we have than the expreſs Declarations of God himſelf? Who can preſcribe to him what ſhall pleaſe him, or preſcribe to us better than he that made us, and knows what is fit for us to do? And what more full, plain, compendious and higher Inſtitution of Religion can there be than the Holy Scripture?

This brings God near to us, and us near to him; here you know his Mind, you ſee his nature, and hear him ſpeak; here you may ſtand as it were upon an *Iſthmus* or Promontory, and take a view of both Worlds; this is the light of our Eyes, the Rule of our Faith, the Law of our Conſcience, and the Foundation of all our Hopes. All this together ſure cannot chuſe but make the reading of the Scripture become a very ſerious, and yet a very delightful employment. And now upon the whole matter, what think you, Dear *Phil.* may not a Gentleman

man entertain himſelf and his time without the relief of Drinking and Gaming?

Phil. What think I, ſay you? Why, I think worſe of my ſelf than ever I did. I do not wonder now at what you ſaid when we firſt came together, *viz.* That you could always find employment for your Time; but I wonder at my own folly: for I plainly ſee now that no Man can have time to be a burden upon him that hath come honeſtly by it; I mean, that hath not ſtollen it from nobler Entertainments to beſtow it upon a Debauch.

Sebaſt. But yet this is not all neither. I perceive I have ſatisfied you both of the pleaſantneſs of ſome lighter, but innocent Exerciſes, which I named in the firſt place; and alſo of the great importance of Prayer and Reading the Scripture, which I laſt ſpoke of: yet as on the one hand I would not have a Man imploy all his vacant hours on the former, ſo neither on the other hand do I think he is bound to exhauſt them wholly upon the latter: No, *Phil.* our Bodies are compounded of various humours, our Souls conſiſt of ſeveral faculties; God is a good and benign Being, and conſults the good and comfort of all the Powers he hath created. Beſides all the forementioned therefore (and thoſe which I have ſuppoſed without naming them particularly) there is a way of entertaining our ſelves, called Study and Meditation. Study, I ſay, in general, not confined to any Subject, but only directed to the general end of improving our ſelves and the time God hath given us in the World.

Of Study & Meditation, the advantages and the difficulties of it.

For why ſhould we abject our ſelves that have

rational Souls, an active vigorous Intellectual Spirit in us? Is not this able to employ it ſelf, our time and our bodily Spirits too? Is not our mind large enough to embrace the whole World? Can we not bring upon the Treatre of our imagination all the occurrences of time paſt as well as preſent. Muſt we needs only pore upon the things juſt before our Eyes? Muſt our underſtandings lie fallow and barren unleſs they be continually ſtirred up by our ſenſes? Are our Souls only given us for Salt to keep the Body ſweet, or ſervilely to cater for our inferiour powers, and not rather to ſubdue and govern them?

Why ſhould not we remember we are Men, and improve our beſt Talent, ſharpen the ſenſe of our Minds, and enlarge and greaten our Spirits? What hinders but that a Man may converſe with himſelf, and never have better Company than when he is moſt ſolitary? How can a Man want Company that hath an Angelical Nature within him, or need diverſion that hath the whole World before him to contemplate?

What ſhould diſcourage or hinder Men from this courſe? Is it the pains and difficulty? Nothing in the World is pleaſanter when a Man is once uſed to it; Is it for fear we ſhould exhauſt our ſelves, and like the Spider ſpin out our own Bowels in our Web? There can be no danger of that, an immortal Soul never wears out; and if the Body goes by the worſt, ſo long as the Spirit is bettered, there is no loſs in all this. Or ſay it ſhould be to no great fruit that we apply our ſelves to Study, yet at leaſt this is gotten by it, That we employ our time and keep our ſelves out of harms, which is as much as we now ſeek for.

Phil. It is generally the fault of Eloquent and Contemplative Men to out-ſhoot the Mark they aim at, and whilſt they talk finely, to deliver very unpracticable things. Pardon me, Dear *Sebaſtian*, if I ſuppoſe this infirmity hath accompanied thoſe great accompliſhments in you, at this time. No doubt but Meditation is a noble entertainment of Time, and queſtionleſs he that hath once got the knack of it, nothing in the World is ſo pleaſant to him: but you muſt conſider there are very few who have ſo much command over themſelves as to hold their minds long ſteady and intent, and perhaps fewer that have ſufficient knowledge to employ their thoughts at home; it requires a great ſtock for a Man to be able to ſet up this Trade by himſelf. Beſides, many Mens Spleens are ſo near their Heads, and there is ſo great affinity between the Animal Spirits and Vapours, that he that goes to exerciſe the one ſtirs up the other: and oftentimes the greater the intention of mind is with which a Man ſets himſelf to think, the greater Cloud is raiſed, and the more impoſſible it will prove for ſuch a Man to diſcern any thing clearly. Your Advice therefore is very good for them that can receive it; but this is no *Catholicon*, no general Receipt.

Sebaſt. I thank you, Sir, moſt heartily for the modeſt and ſeaſonable check you gave to the cariere of my Diſcourſe: I muſt confeſs upon ſecond thoughts that all Men are not fit for Meditation, and therefore it cannot be their Duty; yet I muſt tell you withal, I ſuſpect more are unwilling than uncapable: and I doubt ſome are more afraid of awakening their Conſcience than ſtirring their Spleen by it. However, I have

another Expedient to propound (for the purpose we are upon) which will supply the place of the former, and which, I am sure, can be liable to no Objection; and that is, Conference or Discourse: which when I have recommended to you, I shall have delivered my whole mind.

Of friendly Conference, and the great benefits of it.

God Almighty hath given us Speech to express our selves to one another. We are not left alone in the World so but that every Man hath some Friend or Neighbour to hold correspondence with; why should we not then entertain our selves, our Friends and our time in Friendly Communication, without the help of the Bottle, *&c.* This requires no great intention of Mind, no great Stock is required in this Case; this will stir up no Vapours from our Spleen; and by this way we may not only divert our selves, but elucidate our own thoughts, enlarge our experience, resolve one anothers difficulties, and mutually please and profit one another.

And the more effectually to recommend this Expedient to you, I will first take the confidence to affirm, and do not doubt but I shall by and by make it evidently appear, That this is not only a very gentile and creditable way of conversation, but also (if it be rightly practised) a most pleasant and delightful, and (which perhaps may seem the greatest Paradox of all) one of the most healthful Exercises in the World.

The first of these you will easily grant me when you consider, that Discourse is that which principally distinguishes a wise Man from a Fool. For what else do we take our measures

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of one another by? If a Man diſcourſe of weighty matters, and keep cloſe to the Point, and ſpeak ſharply in the Caſe, we account him a worthy Man. But contrariwiſe if he talk flatly, inſipidly and impertinently, we have no eſteem or reverence for ſuch a Perſon, let his outward appearance and circumſtances be otherwiſe what they will.

It is certain we cannot know a Man's thoughts or the ſenſe of his mind till he expreſs them: A Fool we ſay is a wiſe Man ſo long as he holds his peace, and a wiſe Man differs nothing from a Fool till he ſpeaks. For a Man's Actions may be by rote or cuſtom, or the direction of ſome other perſon, but a Man's Diſcourſe is his own. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh*, ſaid our Saviour. The tongue will betray not only the inclinations and paſſions of the heart, but the very ſenſe and capacity of the mind; and the latter much more than the former (as the Liquor will carry the tincture of the Veſſel.) 'Tis poſſible indeed for an evil and vicious Man to talk vertuouſly, and a ſilly Man may get into a Road of wiſe Sayings; but the Leſſon he hath conn'd will ſoon be at an end, and then he will no more be able to hold out at that rate, than a flaw'd Veſſel to make the ſame ſound with a good one. Wiſdom and Folly are widely different in their natures; but it is Diſcourſe that lays them open and makes the diſtinction conſpicuous: why then ſhould not a Man by practice endeavour to become expert at that which, if he be Maſter of, will be his Glory, but to be ſure will make his Character.

But now for the vulgar methods of Converſation, which commonly conſiſts of Drinking

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Drinking and Gaming are Levelling Practiſes.

and Gaming, they are no better than Levelling Practiſes, that obſerve no diſtance, nor make any diſtinction amongſt Men, the Maſter and Servant are at *Hail Fellow*, the Gentleman and the Clown are upon the Square with one another, the Man of Parts and Learning and the veriеſt Ideot and Coxcomb are upon even Ground in thoſe Entertainments.

As for Drinking, I cannot ſufficiently wonder at that abjection of mind in Perſons of Quality, who, as if they conſented to their own degradation, will contend for Victory with their Inferiors at equal Glaſſes: when it is notorious, that a Porter ſhall bear more than a Gentleman; and a fine Wit ſhall be baffled and diſordered with that which a thick Scull'd dull Sot will carry away well enough, and come off as wiſe a Man as he entred. But ſuppoſe the Gentleman ſhould outdo the Clown, and the Wit the Dunce; yet as the Match was made very imprudently, ſo the Victory would be inglorious.

And then for Gaming, I have heard of an Ape that hath been too hard for his Maſter at that moſt ingenuous Game of Cheſs. But I have known one very near to a Natural that hath been a great Maſter at it. And certainly it is very eaſie to imagine that in thoſe other Games, which are governed by Chance, the Victory may fall to the leſs worthy Perſon. It ſeems therefore a very mean thing to be eagerly intent upon that to which a wiſe Man hath no better Tittle than a Fool, and, if we believe the Proverb, much leſs. To be ſure no Man can be ſo vain as to think himſelf the wiſer or better

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Man for his Conqueſt. But now Diſcourſe diſcriminates Mens real abilities, and bears an impartial Teſtimony to a Man's worth, and the Conteſts of reaſon are therefore truly honourable, becauſe the wiſer Man is ſure to have the Victory.

But then ſecondly, for the pleaſure and delightfulneſs of Diſcourſe, it cannot be doubted but that the Higher Powers in a Man are attended with the ſweeteſt delights, in the exerciſe of themſelves; and the more ſtrong and vigorous the Conſtitution of thoſe Powers is, the more quiek and raviſhing muſt the ſenſe of their peculiar pleaſure conſequently be. This the experience of all ſtudious Men bears teſtimony to, amongſt whom one Truth ſifted out by reaſon is more pleaſant than all the Entertainments of an Epicure. For in Diſcourſe there is a very grateful reliſh in the mere bandying of Arguments to and fro; Great curioſity in diſtinguiſhing, prettineſs in a handſomely dreſs'd probability, ſurprize in Paradoxes ingenuouſly maintained, admirable beauty in that ſtrange variety of Colours in which a good Wit will repreſent things, far beyond the hand and skill of a Painter; all which, with a thouſand other particulars which I paſs by, render the pleaſure of Diſcourſe as much tranſcendent to all inſtances of ſenſuality as Reaſon it ſelf is above Senſe, or a Man ſuperior to a Beaſt.

The Pleaſures of Diſcourſe.

And now in the laſt place for that ſeeming Paradox concerning the wholeſomneſs of Diſcourſing, it is obſerved that they who are curious of the health of their Bo-

Diſcourſing an healthful Exerciſe.

dies,

dies, to the end that they may invigorate all their powers and faculties, have to that purpoſe found out appropriate Exerciſes to all the principal parts: for ſo they ſay, walking is peculiarly good for digeſtion, by gently agitating the Stomach and Bowels; riding is ſingularly beneficial to the Head; playing at Bowls helps the Reins; and the uſe of the long Bow, is eſpecially commended for opening the Breaſt and Lungs, &c. Now I think I may be bold to ſay, that whatſoever each of theſe is to its reſpective part and member, that will ſmart and vigorous Conference perform to the whole Man. For as to the very bodily powers, it warms the Heart and Stomach, dries the Brain, opens the Lungs, quickens the motion of the Blood, and brings a freſh and florid Colour into the Face and whole Habit. And then as for the better part of Man, Diſcourſe raiſes the phancy, exerciſes the memory, clears the thoughts, enlightens the judgment, and improves the reaſoning of the mind. To which add, if you pleaſe, that it diverts melancholy, puts off dozing, baniſhes anxious thoughts and ſollicitude, and in a word, holds a Man ſo fully employed, that it leaves no room for the very temptations of the Devil.

And now I appeal to you, judge whether I have performed my promiſe or no: If I have, then beſides all the aforementioned, here is a manly employment of Time always at hand, an exerciſe that every one is capable of that hath a Tongue in his Head, and a Soul in his Body. Thus we may treat our Neighbour, and coſt us nothing, but what we (it ſeems) have too much of, I mean Time. And thus we may profit our ſelves,

ſelves, and oblige him too beyond all other entertainments.

Phil. I have a great reverence for your judgment; but in truth I cannot tell what to ſay to this Goſſipping kind of Diverſion; and till this moment I never thought lip-labour had been of ſuch value. As for thinking Men, the World is content to let them enjoy the reputation of being wiſe, or at leaſt to ſuſpend their judgment of them till they ſee the contrary in the unreadineſs of ſuch Men in all the inſtances of gentile and pleaſant Converſation. But as for talkative Men (I need not tell you) they have ever been accounted troubleſome and impertinent. And for your own part, Good *Sebaſtian*, give me leave to ſay that your Practice confutes your Doctrine; for after all this, which with great Wit and Eloquence you have ſpoken in the commendation of diſcurſive Converſation; and notwithſtanding that every one who knows you, knows your ſingular dexterity in managing any Subject that falls under Debate in your Company; yet you of all Men are generally obſerved to be the moſt ſilent and reſerved. It is true at this time you have been diſpoſed to talk very freely with me (for which I am greatly obliged to you;) but at ſeveral other times it is a hard matter to pump any thing out of you.

Sebaſt. I ſee plainly that there is a wrong as well as a right Handle to every thing, and a continual proneneſs in Men to miſtake one another. Whenſoever any Vice is cenſured or expoſed, Men preſently think the contrary extream to that practice muſt needs be the Vertue; ſo whilſt I have been recommending ingenuous and friendly Conference, you repreſent

ſent me as if I had made it my deſign to plead for impertinent talkativeneſs: which truly I am ſo far from, that I think the World doth that ſort of Men no wrong in the cenſure it paſſes upon them; amongſt whom (if it be a wiſe Man's Lot to be caſt) he will think himſelf in the Region of Parrots, and for his deliverance be tempted to pray for deafneſs as a great Bleſſing. No, *Phil.* no, I would neither have men ſay all they can, nor much leſs talk whether they can or no. But I would have them firſt think to direct their ſpeaking, and then ſpeak, that a judgment may be made of their thoughts: I would that Men ſhould bend their minds whenever they relax their Tongues, and try the ſtrength of one anothers Heads in reaſoning rather than in drinking.

Juſt occaſions of Taciturnity or Reſervedneſs ſometimes in Converſation.

But then as for what your ſelf or others have obſerved of my Carriage in Company, I confeſs the Obſervation is rightly taken, and I will ingenuouſly aſſign you the occaſions of it; which are (as far as I know my ſelf) ſuch as theſe: In the firſt place, it ſometimes falls out, that the Subject which other Men are diſcourſing of, is not very agreeable to my mind; as in theſe unquiet times, the common Theme is News; which as it is uſually managed is frequently attended with pragmaticalneſs and cenſure of the Government under which we live, or at leaſt the effect of it is the filling one another with fears and jealouſies, and the tormenting a Man's ſelf before the time, with his own or other Mens dreams and ſuſpicions. Now in this Caſe I am generally ſilent, at leaſt till I can find a fit tranſition

tranſition, and have the good luck to turn the ſtream of Diſcourſe ſome other way.

Again, ſometimes I am in the Company of thoſe who are every way my Betters; and there I think it as much more adviſable to hear than to ſpeak, as it is better to reap than to ſow.

Sometimes alſo I meet with a Company of deſultorious Wits who skip ſo haſtily from one thing to another, that they over-run me; and whilſt I am meditating what to ſay pertinently to the Queſtion in hand, they are gotten into another Subject: A Man muſt ride Poſt, or be left behind by ſuch Diſcourſers.

But beſides all this, ſometimes a mere melancholy humour ſeizes me; which ſo benumbs me, that I am for that Fit altogether uſeleſs in Society. But let that be as it may, or however my practice falls ſhort of my counſel, I am certain my Example is not ſufficient to counterbalance the Reaſons I have given. Wherefore let me again heartily recommend it to you, not only for its own benefit, but if it were but to ſuperſede and lay aſide thoſe other ſoft and ſilly diverſions which have of late ſo far uſurped upon humane Society, as well nigh wholly to ingroſs to themſelves all Mens vacant hours, and a great deal more.

Phil. You have the Aſcendant of me, and may perſwade me to what you will: But, Good Sir, do not convert me from a good Fellow to a prating Fool. If I had been uſed to ſtudy, and been converſant in Books, as you have, I might have been in a capacity to pleaſe my ſelf, and perhaps the Company too with Diſcourſe; but for want of that Education, ſilence will generally be my beſt diſcretion.

Sebaſt. Books, *Phil!* It is neither Books nor much reading that makes a wiſe Man. How many ſhrewd Men have you known, and very well accompliſhed in moſt parts of Converſation, that never had any great matter of Clerkſhip? And on the other ſide, amongſt the great number of thoſe that have had all the advantages of Bookiſh Education, how few are thoſe that are really the better for it? With many Men Reading is nothing better than a dozing kind of diddleneſs, and the Book is a mere Opiate that makes them ſleep with their Eyes open. 'Tis perverted into an Antidote againſt thinking wiſely, and made a creditable pretence for diſmiſſion of buſineſs. Such Mens ſtudying is only an artifice to reconcile the eaſe and voluptuouſneſs of ſloth with the reputation of wiſdom; a gentile and wary kind of Epicuriſm, that purſues without pain or ſhame, and in which Men ſpend their time without profit to themſelves or uſefulneſs to the World.

Of the uſe and abuſe of Books and Reading.

Again, there are ſome with whom Bookiſhneſs is a Diſeaſe: For by over-much Reading they ſurcharge their minds, and ſo digeſt nothing. They ſtuff themſelves ſo full of other Mens Notions, that there is no room for their faculties to diſplay themſelves. Such as theſe after all their Reading can no more be accounted learned, than a Beaſt of burden may that carries a Student's Books for him. Only ſo much Meat is properly nouriſhment to the Body as a Man can macerate and digeſt, as he can apply to the reparation of his Body, when he can ſeparate the ſuperfluities, and be ſtronger and lightſomer after it; more than this breeds ill humors, obſtructs

obſtructs the paſſages, and impairs the ſtate of health inſtead of advancing it; and ſo much Study only is profitable as will excite a Man's thoughts, as will afford hints or ſallies to the mind, or as will furniſh him with matter for Meditation and Diſcourſe; which two laſt things are the two great inſtruments of improving our ſelves, and therefore are to preſcribe the meaſures of our ſtudy and reading.

Wherefore it was well ſaid by a Great Man of our Country, That Reading indeed might make a full and copious Man, but Meditation made a profound Man, and Diſcourſe a clear, diſtinct and uſeful Man. For Reading at moſt doth but make a Man's mind equal to that of the Author he reads; but Meditation ſets him upon the ſhoulders of his Author, by which means he ſees farther than he did or could do. Or whereas the one may fill up all the preſent capacity of a Mans mind, the other, *viz.* Meditation, ſtretches and enlarges thoſe capacities. And then for Diſcourſe (which is that we are now ſpeaking of) beſides the advantages which it hath in common with Meditation, it opens and unfolds a Mans thoughts, and ſo brings his Notions to a Teſt, and makes proof of the ſolidity or weakneſs of his Conceptions: By which means, as on the one hand he ſhall not run away with the ſhadows of things inſtead of the ſubſtance; ſo on the other hand, when his apprehenſions are ſifted, and approved to be right and ſound, his mind will be confirmed againſt wavering, and he will become conſtant and conſiſtent with himſelf. I have often obſerved, with equal pleaſure and wonder, that by the mere propounding a difficulty to another, I have preſently been

able to resolve that which was too hard for me, whilst I revolved it only in my own Breast. For by that opening and unfolding of our thoughts, we let in light to our own judgments, and see clearer than we did before.

Besides, a Man is too apt to have a partial fondness to the issue of his own brain; but when he hath brought his conceptions to the impartial Touchstone of other Mens judgments, and as it were tried them by the light, he will nither be apt to be upon all occasions over-confident, peremptory and dogmatical; (as you may observe many reserved studious Men to be, who when once they give vent to their thoughts, labour under a kind of incontinency of mind, and will be continually dictating and asserting at all adventures) not on the other side will he stumble at every rub, and stagger at every objection, and so give up the best Cause upon the slightest (but unforeseen) Attack.

And there is one thing more very considerable in this matter; namely, that by Conference a Man is accustomed to methodize and digest his thoughts in order; by which means his Notions are not only rendred more beautiful, but are more at hand, and also more perspicuous and fitter for use. Whereas contrariwise (let a Man have read never so much, and meditated too in to the bargain) without this expedient all his Notions will lie very odly and confusedly, and come out all in a heap or huddle. In summ, He that uses himself only to Books, is fit for nothing but for a Book; and he that converses with no body, is fit to converse with no body.

Phil. In truth, *Sebastian*, though I am very sensible of my own defects in Point of Learning; yet

yet in that little experience which I have had in the World, I have ſeen ſo many inſtances of the ill uſe, or rather no uſe that ſome Men have made of it, that I am not only convinced there is ſome truth in what you ſay, but am the better inclined to be content with my own education. I have known ſome mighty Bookiſh Men like full Veſſels without vent, as if they were troubled with the Gripes; their Notions ferment in them, but they cannot utter them either to their own eaſe, or the profit of others. And again, ſome Mens learning hath ſerved only to make them pedantick and troubleſome, to make a noiſe with words and terms of Art, every whit as offenſive as the clatter of the Tablemen, which you laugh'd at even now. Notwithſtanding, by your favour, it cannot be doubted, but Learning hath mighty advantages; and I verily think you ſhould ſpeak againſt your own Conſcience if you condemned it in the general: Wherefore you muſt excuſe me if I continue of the opinion, that it is next to impoſſible, without more of it than I can pretend to, to hold ſuch Converſation as you are putting me upon.

Sebaſt. Excuſe me, Dear *Phil*, I do not in the leaſt put any ſlight upon Learning, or the means of it, Books and Study; I know well it is of admirable uſe in a wiſe Man's hand, becauſe it gradually and inſenſibly opens Mens minds, and both gives them a quicker ſight and affords them a larger proſpect. And even on the moſt ordinary parted Men it hath at leaſt this effect, to calm the Spirits, and to ſweeten their temper, by ſubduing the fierceneſs and ferity of Mens Conſtitutions. And therefore I heartily wiſh, that no Gentleman (eſpecially) were permitted

to attain his State and Fortunes without this qualification. So that all I was saying was only this, that you nor any Man of your capacity ought to discourage your selves upon the pretence of your lesser advantages that way; forasmuch as a wise and a good Man may (though perhaps not with the same ease) with a very little of it maintain an ingenuous and profitable Conversation.

Phil. Perhaps it may be so as you say: But then certainly a Man must have very extraordinary natural abilities to supply that defect.

Sebast. No, *Phil*, that needs not neither; for Discourse will both supply the want of acquired abilities, and also improve the natural. I suppose you remember the Saying of *Solomon*, *As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend.* I confess I have heard that Passage of the wise Man applied to the visiting and comforting a Friend in Adversity, which certainly doth mightily buoy up and support a Man's Spirits when he finds that he is not altogether forsaken of his Friend, but owned by him in the lowest ebb of his Fortunes. But I think it is every whit as true and applicable to that we are speaking of, as if he had said that the Company and Conversation of a Friend doth as well quicken a Man's wits, and improve his understanding, as one Iron Instrument is sharpened by another. For as I said before, Conference and Discourse give us the advantage of whatsoever he (we converse with) hath read or thought upon that Subject, and so we reap the benefit of his reading, and of his meditations too. And then be-

Conversation improves a Man more than Books and Study.

sides

ſides that, we exerciſe our own judgment upon the matter ſo digeſted and prepared for us; the very preſence and attention of our Friend ſharpens the attention of our minds; his Queſtion prevents our extravagancy and wandring, and keeps us in a method, and his expectation from us holds our thoughts cloſe and ſteady to the Point in Debate. By all which not only the Stock of our Knowledge is improved, but the Patrimony alſo; I mean the very powers of the Soul. In conſideration of all which that Great Man of our Country, whom I cited but now, doth not ſtick to pronounce, That if it ſhould be a Man's hard Fortune to have no body to converſe withal, it were better he ſhould talk to a Poſt than not open his mind at all.

Phil. There you nick it, *Sebaſtian*; by that laſt word (whoever was the Author of it) I perceive a wiſe Man may make ſome uſe of ſuch a Tooll as I am, if it be but to reflect and echo back his own thoughts upon himſelf. But in earneſt, Sir, now that you have encourag'd me, I begin to think ſomething better of my ſelf, and am reſolved to try what may be done in the way you recommend. But what would you have a Man diſcourſe about? I am afraid, if there be not ſome care in the Choice of a Subject, all will degenerate into Goſſipping and impertinent Chat.

Sebaſt. There is no need of ſollicitude in that Particular, foraſmuch as any, even the moſt obvious and occaſional Subject, will enable us to attain the end we aim at, provided it be followed home; I mean, talk of what matter you will, if ſo be you do not talk flatly and careleſly about it, but ſet your thoughts on work and

they will bring forth both pleaſure and profit. For the more exerciſe of our minds improves them as well as that of the body doth the ſtate of bodily health; and whilſt our thoughts are intent, though we are not ſenſible how time ſlips away, yet we ſhall be ſenſible in the concluſion that we have not quite loſt it.

Beſides, you have obſerved Muſicians to make the moſt curious deſcant upon the plaineſt ground, and have ſeen ſeveral of the *Indian* Manufactures, where the moſt exquiſite Art hath been beſtowed upon the meaneſt Materials: 'Tis not therefore the Theme, but the proſecution of it that is conſiderable; for, as I ſaid, Let that be what you will, if you purſue it with a train of Thoughts, and eſpecially if you be vigilant to take notice of, and apprehend thoſe hints that will thence be occaſionally ſtarted, you ſhall quickly be amazed to find your ſelf led before you were aware into ſome ſpacious and beautiful Field of Contemplation, wherein you, may at once, both loſe and refreſh your ſelf.

Notwithſtanding, I acknowledge to you, that the pitching upon ſome good and uſeful ſubject at firſt is both the ſhorteſt and the ſureſt way to attain our end. For the very importance and concern of a weighty affair naturally rouzes up our minds, and collects and fixes our looſe and ſcattered thoughts; as you ſhall ſeldom ſee any Man drouſie and inattentive whilſt a matter of conſequence to his Life, or Credit, or Fortunes is in agitation.

Therefore that having thus prepared you to it, I may now ſpeak a great truth to you, and that you may effectually ſhake off all the fooleries

ries in fashion, and make conversation profitable. And if indeed you would awaken your Senses, and improve your self and your time together, let me above all things in the World commend to you Religious Communication, talk of the Concerns of a Soul, and of another World. This is a Subject of that weight and moment, that it cannot fail either to make you intent, or the Company you shall be in grave and serious; and it is withal so vast and large, that you can never fear to be run on ground; for it will always afford you fresh matter of Discourse.

Discourse about religious Matters recommended.

Phil. 'Tis true the Subject is copious enough, and I may be sure to have it all to my self, because no Body will talk with me about it. Who is there now a-days that troubles his Head with Religion, or especially makes it any part of Conversation? If perhaps any mention of it fall in by the bye, it is presently let fall again, as if it were too hot for mens Fingers, and at most it is made but a kind of Parenthesis, which may be kept in, or left out of the Discourse without interruption of the Sence. You have found me out a Subject indeed, but now you must seek me out Company too to treat upon it. For as the World now is, this will seem so irksom a business, that no time will be so tedious as that which is spent upon it, and so we have lost the whole design we were levelling at.

Sebast. Who (say you) will discourse of Religion? Why, every Body sure that thinks of it, for it is a matter that comes so home and close to every Man, that he must be a stark Sot, and destitute of the common sense and discretion

discretion of a Man, that is not mightily affected with it.

For, tell me, is there any Man so absurdly vain as to think he shall not die? Can any Man that observes the frail contexture of his Body, and the innumerable accidents he is subject to, think himself immortal? Or can he overlook the common condition of mankind, and when he sees Men daily drop away and die in their full strength, and in spight of all helps and advantages of preservation; yet be so fond as to imagine he shall escape the common lot? And seeing what happens to another Man to day, may befal himself to morrow; or however, he is certain that he cannot be of any long continuance in this World; who, I say, that is sensible of this can chuse but pry beyond the Curtain, and bethink himself what shall come after?

Is it not the very temper and constitution of our minds to be inquisitive of the future? Is it not a great part of our Prerogative above Beasts, that whereas they are wholly taken up with what's present to them, and neither mind what is past nor to come; we by the largeness of our Souls embrace both, and do we not worthily count him an Ideot that is so short-sighted as not to see beyond his Nose end?

The importance of Religion.

Doth not every wise Man provide for what may be? and do not even the most cold and incredulous suspect at least there may something concern us after the present life? and is there any Man that can, if he would never so fain, quite rid his thoughts of it? Sure therefore every Man that thinks he shall die (that is every Man that lives) thinks something of Religion, if it be

be but for fear of the Worſt. Perhaps you will ſay, there are ſome Men, who though they know they ſhall die, yet think they ſhall die as the Beaſts die, and have no concern hereafter: But are they worthy to be accounted Men that can phanſie ſuch a thing? A Beaſt indeed hath life, and ſenſe, and motion, and participates of ſome kind of phancy and memory; but doth it underſtand a Diſcourſe, or weigh an Argument? Is it able to inferr from Premiſes, to remember things gone and paſt, and recal them to mind at pleaſure? Can it compare things together, gather the reſult, diſtinguiſh or paſs a judgment upon appearances? Will any Man be ſo ridiculous as to ſay, Beaſts are conſciencious too, that they reflect upon their own Actions, and accuſe or excuſe themſelves accordingly? or have they free will to determine their Elections which way they pleaſe, even againſt the intereſt of their Senſes? Now he that conſiders all theſe vaſt differences will, if he have the Reaſon of a Man, conclude it very improbable, that a Creature of this admirable make ſhould be only deſigned to be a Pageant for a day, and be totally diſſolved at the date of this ſhort Life; eſpecially if he conſider withal, that theſe powers and capacities, which we have ſhewn Man to be indued with, do not only put him upon the thoughts, and expectations, and deſires of another ſtate; but render him marvellouſly fit for it, and capable of it; inſomuch that ſeveral of the nobleſt of theſe endowments are wholly in vain, if there be no ſuch thing, and that a Man died as the Beaſts do.

Beſides all this, doth not every Man that hath Eyes in his Head to obſerve the admirable ſtructure

cture of the World, conclude that it muſt be the Workmanſhip of a God, and he a great, a wiſe, a good and a juſt Being; and can he think ſo, and not reſolve there muſt be a great neceſſity of, and reality in Religion? that is, in the reverend obſervance of that Great Majeſty that deſerves it, and who hath both made us capable of performing it to him, and obliged us thereunto.

Now if all, or but any part of this be true, who is ſo mad as to have no concern for this God; Religion, and another World? and who is there that having any concern for them, can chuſe but think fit to make it ſome part of his buſineſs, the employment of ſome part of his time, and the Subject of his moſt ſerious debates? Hath any Man a moſt important Cauſe *ſub Judice*, and his Trial drawing on, and doth he never think of it, or diſcourſe his Caſe with his Friends? Hath any Man a great Eſtate in a Foreign Country, or a huge Patrimony in reverſion, and never ſpeaks of it? Hath any Man either a conſiderable Friend or a formidable Enemy, and never expreſſes himſelf concerning the one or the other? Surely therefore ſeeing Religion imports all theſe Concernments, a Man may find thoſe that will diſcourſe with him on the Point.

Phil. I readily conſent to you, that the buſineſs of Religion is a moſt ſerious Affair, and worthy of the greateſt conſideration; but beſides (as I have ſaid) there are very few will correſpond with a Man in diſcourſe about it: To tell you truly, I am ſomewhat of opinion, that it is not fit for that kind of treatment. As it is a ſacred, ſo it is a ſecret thing, tranſacted only between God and a Man's own Conſcience,

ſcience, and therefore is rather the Theme of a Man's thoughts, the ſolitary employment of his own heart, and ſo fit to be kept up in the Cloſet of his breaſt, and not ſo proper matter or Diſcourſe.

Sebaſt. And I as readily yield to you, Dear *Phil*, that the Soul and Spirit of Religion is very retired and inward, and ſo inacceſſible to other Men, that they can neither ſee it, nor judge of it. But though the firſt ſource and ſprings of it lie very deep, yet why the ſtreams of it ſhould not iſſue forth both in words and actions I cannot comprehend. I have read of a ſort of Men about the Apoſtolick times called *Gnoſticks*, who gave out that it was ſufficient to retain an inward belief and a right ſence of Chriſtian Religion in their minds and hearts, although they neither made profeſſion of the Faith with their mouths, nor practiſed the Laws of it in their Lives and Converſations. This I look upon as an hypocritical Artifice of theirs, to the end that they might make a ſaving Bargain of Chriſtianity; a device to ſleep in a whole skin, and neither run any hazards, nor put themſelves to any difficulties for Conſcience ſake; and if they got nothing by Chriſt Jeſus, they thought they would be ſure to loſe nothing by him. But as I am very confident a Man of your ſincerity can harbour none of their deſigns, ſo I aſſure my ſelf what you have ſaid is not upon their Principles: Yet I muſt tell you, when the Apoſtle level'd a blow at them he reach'd your phancy alſo; for he ſaith expreſly, *With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made to ſalvation.*

Religion reſts not in the mind only.

Phil.

Phil. O pardon me, Sir, I make no Queſtion but that when a Man is called to make profeſſion of his Faith, and to diſcover what Religion he is of, then to diſſemble is to betray it, and to be ſilent on ſuch a critical occaſion is to revolt and apoſtatize from it; and in that ſence (I take it) another Apoſtle hath required us, *To render to every man that aſketh us a reaſon of the hope that is in us*, &c. As if he had ſaid, Be not aſhamed of your perſwaſion, but owne and defend your Religion, at the greateſt and moſt adverſe Tribunals where-ever it ſhall be impeached. But this is not the Caſe: We are not now ſpeaking of what muſt be done upon an authoritative Inquiſition into our Conſciences, or in times of Perſecution; but what is to be done in times of Peace, and in common Converſation; and there I am ſtill of Opinion, that at leaſt it is not an expreſs Duty to talk of Religion.

Sceptic. Nor do I differ from you therein. For I do not aſſent to as an univerſal Duty to make Religion the matter of our Diſcourſe: But my meaning is, that it will exceedingly become us to do ſo ſometimes. And I verily aſſure my ſelf, that he that hath a quick ſenſe of God upon his mind, will have ſavoury expreſſions of him ſometimes upon ordinary occaſions (if a fooliſh modeſty do not too much overcome him) as well as witneſs a good Confeſſion in times of Perſecution. For as our Saviour ſaid, (in the paſſage I mentioned before) *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.* And it ſeems to me more eaſily conceivable, that there ſhould be a great fire without any ſmoke, or a great light without any heat, than that ſuch a

Man

Man as is inwardly principled with the fear and love of God ſhould be wholly Tongue-tied, or be either able or willing altogether to ſtifle and ſuppreſs his Sentiments. *Can a man carry fire in his boſom* (ſaid the wiſe Man) *and not be burnt?* Such an holy fervour as I ſpeak of will aſſuredly both ſeek and find a vent for it ſelf, and break out upon all fitting occaſions in reverend and affectionate expreſſions; by which means a Man in the firſt place eaſes his own breaſt, and beſides, thus this holy fire not only preſerves it ſelf from extinction, but propagates it ſelf alſo, warming and inflaming others.

You have heard, I ſuppoſe, of an odd Superſtition among the *Jews*, who out of a pretended reverence of the Name of God, and to preſerve it from prophanation (as they ſuppoſed) ſo long forbad the common pronunciation of it, till at length by the intermiſſion of uſing it, they had quite forgotten how to pronounce it. And thus I am afraid it would fare with Religion, if Men ſhould (out of I know not what conceit) forbear all Diſcourſe of God and another World, the reſult would be, that in time both would be forgotten. Nor is it (as you ſeem to imagine) only times of Perſecution that ought to rowſe up our Spirits, and call for expreſſions of our Zeal; for the road of buſineſs, the ſucceſſively flowing Tide of variety of Entertainments in this World, the ſoft Charms of pleaſant recreations, the blandiſhments of continual proſperity, and the ruſt upon our minds contracted by lying ſtill in eaſe and ſecurity, do more endanger

Religious Diſcourſe as neceſſary in times of proſperity as of perſecution.

danger the ſtate of Religion than thoſe trying times you ſpeak of. And therefore Atheiſm is well known to be a Weed that thrives moſt in the beſt Weather. The Seed that was ſown upon ſtony Ground fell away when the hot Sun ſcorched it, becauſe it had no depth of Earth; but that which was ſown among the Thorns was choaked too, though the Soil was never ſo good; in a word, Stormy Weather in the Church may tempt Men to be falſe and treacherous and Renegadoes, but I believe it never made an Atheiſt; that and prophaneneſs are the ill fruit of proſperity. So that you ſee there is need that the Spirit of Piety ſhould exert it ſelf as well in the one ſeaſon as in the other.

Neither will the publickly ſtated times or forms and exerciſes of Religion ſufficiently ſecure it againſt this danger, without ſuch voluntary efforts and ſallies of it as we are ſpeaking of. For in regard God is not to be ſeen, and the World is before us: the World to come is at diſtance, and the preſent World at hand: Ill examples are numerous, and good ones few and rare. And in a word, we dwell in ſo cold a Region, that we had need not only to uſe a great deal of exerciſe, but frequently to rub up one another. Therefore as *Socrates* is ſaid to have brought down Philoſophy (*è Cœlo in urbes*) from ſpeculation to practice, from high Notions to the common Affairs of Life; ſo it ſeems neceſſary to us not only to be religious at Church, and devout in our Cloſets, but to allow it a ſhare in our daily and ordinary converſe.

Phil. Nay, if you be for that, what think you of a demure ſort of people amongſt us, that, as if their tongues were tipt with Religion, will

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be always Canting in a Scripture-phraſe. Theſe men ſeem to think it prophane to ſpeak intelligibly and in the common Language, and account a *Jewiſh* kind of Gibberiſh to be the peculiar *Shibboleth* of the godly Party: And ſome of them arrive at ſuch a pitch either of Hypocriſie or Melancholy (I am loth to pronounce whether) that (upon the matter) they allow no other Diſcourſe to be lawful but what hath a tincture of Religion. Now for my part I look upon theſe people as very abſurd and ridiculous, and therefore I hope you do not intend to give them countenance in what you are ſaying. *Of hypocritical Canting.*

Sebaſt. So far from it, *Phil*, that I account the former of the two ſorts of men, which you ſpeak of, to be no better than a Generation of nauſeous Phariſees, foraſmuch as nothing betrays Hypocriſie ſo much as over-doing, and by that courſe of theirs they render Religion loathſome and ridiculous, and tempt Men to think it all Trick and Cheat. And for the other, they ſeem to be a pitiable, but crack-brain'd ſort of Men, who render Religion very uncomfortable to themſelves, and indeed impracticable and impoſſible. God knows we are not Angels but Men, and have concerns for the preſent World as well as for the other; and conſequently it can be no fault, but a juſt duty, to take care of them, and in order thereto to deliberate, to take advice, and to diſcourſe about them.

And this I am ſo confident of, that I verily believe, the Apoſtle when he forbids *that any corrupt communication ſhould proceed out of our mouths*, and enjoins *that it be ſuch as is good to the uſe of edifying*, intended we ſhould interpret the latter

ter expreſſion by the former, *viz.* that inſtead of rotten and filthy talk we ſhould tend ſo earneſtly to the contrary, that we might turn the ſtream of Mens Diſcourſe to that which is vertuous and profitable. And when he adds, *That it may miniſter grace to the hearers*, I think he requires that very thing which I have been recommending to you, namely, that we ſhould take all fair opportunities of bringing Religion into Plea, and of ſuggeſting good Meditations to one another. But I can by no means think he reſtrains all communication to that Subject, provided that which is about other matter be not lewd or fooliſh, but ſavory and ingenious, uſeful and pertinent. And this I am the more confirmed by another paſſage of the ſame Apoſtle, where he directs that *our ſpeech be ſeaſoned with grace as with ſalt*. Which, as I underſtand it, imports as if he ſaid, that our moſt common converſation ſhould have ſome reliſh of our Religion; not be wholly religious, no more than our meat ſhould be all Salt, but ſeaſoned with it.

Common diſcourſe lawful.

Col. iv. 6.

Moreover, when our Saviour forewarns us, *that for every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account at the day of judgment*, I can by no means think his meaning was that every word that hath not immediate relation to Religion ſhould be accounted idle, and as ſuch incurr damnation. Far be ſuch an Interpretation from the merciful and condeſcending Laws of our Saviour: If this were ſo, Chriſtianity was a moſt anxious thing, and the lives of men muſt be perpetually vexed with ſcrupuloſity. But I take it, he intended only to repreſent to us that

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the Judgment to come ſhall be very exact and particular, ſo as to take notice, not only of our actions, and the greater paſſages of our lives, but that our very words alſo ſhall come into eſtimate and conſideration.

You ſee therefore I am ſo far from countenancing either an hypocritical Cant, or a ſuperſtitious Melancholy, that I do not think Religion ought importunely to thruſt it ſelf into converſation to the excluſion of every thing beſides it ſelf, but that it have place in our Debates, and where there is room for choice, there it is my opinion that we give it alſo the precedence.

Of Diſputes in Religion, the vanity and miſchiefs of them.

Phil. Well, ſo far we are agreed: But I pray give me leave to go a little further with you. What kind of Religious Conference is it you would be at? Would you have Men enter into Diſputes about Divine Matters? This I the rather ask, becauſe there is another ſort of men (beſides thoſe we now ſpoke of) who ſeem to be mighty zealous of Religion; but their heat breaks out wholly this way, and they fill the place where-ever they are with noiſe and clamour, with duſt and ſmoak: Nothing can be ſaid in their preſence, but inſtantly a Controverſie is ſtarted, the Cudgels are taken up, and to it they go: Scarcely any Body is Orthodox enough for them; for they ſpin ſo fine a Thred, and have ſuch Cobweb Divinity, that the leaſt bruſh againſt it is not to be endured: And yet withal, they are as poſitive and decretal in their aſſertions, that the Pope himſelf is no body to them. One would think they were Privy Counſellors of Heaven, they define with ſo great confidence

what will and what will not please God, and damn to the Pit of Hell all that come not up exactly to their definitions and determinations. These, I assure you, are men that bear a great port in the World, therefore I would fain know your opinion of them.

Sebast. Truly, *Phil*, I have no opinion of them at all: I phansie neither their Faith nor their Charity; the one I account to be a great deal too big, and the other as much too little.

Phil. Agreed again. And now I'll tell you my thoughts a little more fully on this Point: I have always lookt upon this Disputative Religiousness, as no better than a new-fashioned Knight-Errantry, which puts men continually upon quest of Adventures, and makes Monsters of every Wind-mill that comes in their way. For these men, if there do but happen to be an inconsiderate expression let fall by any body, presently raise such a Tragedy upon it, as if Faith consisted wholly of Punctilio's, (or, as if you should say, a Line was made up of Points,) and that every petty opinion were of moment enough to overturn the world. The contrary whereof I take to be so true that I suspect whether that be of any moment in Religion which admits of Dispute; for methinks it is not agreeable to the Goodness of God to suffer any thing of that universal concern to all men to remain very obscure and controversial. I should think therefore this knotty kind of Timber never fit for edification. In plain truth (if you will pardon a rude Similitude) I phansie these great Masters of Dispute to be like the ordinary Professors of Rat-Catching, who commonly draw more Vermine to the place than they destroy

ſo theſe raiſe more Controverſies than they can decide, ſtart more Difficulties than they can aſſoil, and ſo beget Schiſms, gratifie Pride, inflame Differences, and foment Heart-burnings amongſt men, that might otherwiſe live peaceably together here, and for ought I know go to Heaven hereafter.

Sebaſt. Moſt ingeniouſly ſpoken, Dear *Phil*, and according to my very heart. If I thought I could match your Wit I would add, That whenever I ſee a Knot of theſe Diſputants together, it puts me in mind of a Story or Fable, which you will, of a Company of Apes that had gotten a Glow-worm amongſt them, upon which they heaped Sticks and other little combuſtible matter, and laying their heads together blow with all their might, as hoping to make ſome ſtrange improvement of that little ſhining Particle. But when they have done all they can, are neither able to encreaſe the light, nor much leſs to warm themſelves by it. So theſe little diſputing Wits, after all their bluſtering, neither bring any uſeful truth to light, nor warm their own or other mens breaſts with any ſpark of true Piety or Charity; but contrariwiſe frequently obſcure the one, and extinguiſh the other.

It is not therefore diſputing in Religion that I would provoke you to; but the improvement of the indiſputable Rules of it, *viz.* to make your ſelf and thoſe you converſe with, ſenſible of the vital Principles and Powers of Chriſtianity, not to chafe one another into a paſſion, but to rub up one anothers Sentiments, and mutually to warm one anothers hearts with Devotion. By wiſe and affectionate applications to beget an

equal fervour of Spirit. And in a word, that when Friends are met together they ſhould, like Flint and Steel, raiſe both light and heat by their mutual and amicable Colliſions.

And why, I pray you, Dear *Phil*, ſhould not Religion have its turn in our Converſation? What reaſon can be given that pious men ſhould not diſcourſe as freely and ſavourily of holy Things, as they, or other men, concerning common Affairs? Why ſhould our leſſer Concerns for this World, our ſecular buſineſs, be the only Subject of our Communication? Why, when ſome talk of their Trades, their Pleaſures and of News, and the like, ſhould not we talk of our Callings, as we are Chriſtians, of the intereſts our Souls, and the hopes in another World? Why may not we diſcourſe of our Heavenly Country, whither we are going, as well as other men buſie themſelves about Foreign Countries, which perhaps they never ſaw, nor ever ſhall be concerned in?

You your ſelf acknowledge Religion to deſerve the moſt ſerious and attentive Conſideration of our minds, and upon the ſame account (if you be conſiſtent with your ſelf) you will be induced to believe it the moſt worthy and commendable Subject of Diſcourſe, as having all thoſe advantages that can recommend any Subject to the Debate of ingenious Men, as it were eaſie to make appear if it were neceſſary.

Phil. Sir, I value your judgment, but muſt make uſe of my own; if therefore it be not too troubleſom to you, let me entreat you to make out that more fully to me, and then I promiſe you, I will either comply with the reaſons you give

give, or will ſhew you mine to the contrary.

Sebaſt. With all my heart, Sir; and to do it with as much brevity as may be: I will deſire you to conſider in the firſt place whether this Subject, Religion, doth not contain in it the moſt noble and excellent Points of Enquiry, and conſequently be not the moſt worthy, not only to take up the Affections, but to exerciſe the Wits of Men upon. Such as for inſtance, about the Nature and Attributes of God, the Wiſdom of that Providence that manages and governs the World, the nature of Spirits, and particularly of the Soul of Man, of Conſcience and Freedom of Will, of the Nature and Obligation of Laws, of the Grounds of Faith and the Efficacy of it, of the nature and ſucceſs of Repentance, of Redemption and the way of Propitiating God to Man, of the Judgment to come, the Reſurrection of the Body, and Eternal Life, with abundance more of the like nature; Points all vaſtly great and copious, profound and difficult, yet equally neceſſary and diſcoverable; ſuch as are able to ſtir up and provoke the greateſt capacities, and yet invite and encourage the meaneſt: In a word, ſuch things as that there is nothing elſe within the whole Sphere of Knowledge, that either requires or deſerves ſuch ſerious Debates.

Religion the nobleſt Subject of Diſcourſe.

Now how trivial and childiſh a thing were it whilſt we have all theſe wiſe and concerning matters to treat of, to be taken up only with Dogs and Horſes, with Drinks and Sawces, with Faſhions and News (as is too commonly the practice?)

And if you will pleaſe to conſider well the

aforesaid Particulars, and especially if you make trial of the course I am advising you, you will find these Subjects to be every whit as pleasant and delightful as they are necessary and important. For what can be imagined able to minister more delight than the lively representation of another World and Eternal Life, when men modestly reason together, and endeavour to affect one another's hearts with the certainty and unspeakable felicity of living for ever? of the ravishing contentment of enjoying everlasting Friendship? of being out of the reach of Fate or Chance, out of the Sphere of Mortality, Sickness and pain, care and vexation? of being exempted from all weakness, sillyness, passion and infirmity? of being exalted above all temptation, and secured against all possibility of Apostasie? If Discourse of this nature doth not affect a man beyond all other, it must be because either he hath not the sense of a man, or not the Faith of a Christian.

Pleasantness of religious Conference.

Or suppose men should take a Subject somewhat lower, and conferr together about the Providence of God, that governs the present World. What a beautiful thing is it to observe all the variety of second causes to move in a just order under the first, toward certain and uniform ends, the Glory of God, and good of men! And that though the Divine Wisdom may lose and confound us in that admirable maze it seems to make, yet there is nothing defective or redundant in the whole World, no room for Chance, nothing unforeseen, no cross accident that hinders the projection, the same design is all along carried on, and at last certainly

tainly attained: But especially if we confine our Contemplations of Divine Providence to that more peculiar Object of his, his Church, it will become yet more visible and more comfortable; where if we wisely conferr times past with the present, and view the whole process, we shall find that even Schisms, Heresies, Persecutions and the greatest calamities of the Church tend to its advantage in Conclusion. But above all, that which comes neareſt to a man, and must needs affect him most in the affair of Providence, is that thereby he finds himself under the protection of a mighty Being, that nothing befals him without the consent of his Great Patron, that he is not left to himself to scuffle with ill Fortune and second Causes as well as he can; but he is the charge of God Almighty, the Favourite of Heaven: This certainly is highly pleasant and satisfactory above any thing in this World.

Or if we go lower yet, and make the Subject of our Discourse to be about Peace of Conscience, of the bravery of a Victory over a man's passions or temptations, of the unspeakable comfort and satisfaction in doing good; any of these will afford us an entertainment beyond the flavour of Wine, or the odd variety of Chance in a Game; and indeed (to speak to the Point) above all other Subjects of Discourse and conversation. And although it be true that there is none of these but a man may contemplate with great satisfaction by himself alone, and in solitude; yet as all social Exercises of the Body are more refreshing than those that are solitary, so it is here, the comfort that results from these Contemplations is doubled and multiplied by

reflection

reflection in friendly Conferences. And all this together shall be my first Argument by which I recommend Discourse of Religion; what think you of this, *Philander?*

Phil. I think very well of it: But, I pray you, let me hear out the whole Cause, and then I'll give my Answer.

Sebast. Why, then my second Plea for Religious Discourse, is from the consideration that it is far the most safe, prudent and inoffensive matter of Communication, and that in several respects: In the first place it kindles no Coals, stirs up no strife, inflames no Bodies choler, and touches upon no Man's interest or reputation. You cannot talk of your self, without vanity or envy; you can hardly talk of your Neighbours, without some suspicious reflection; nor of those that are fartheſt off, but you are in danger that some Body present may be concerned for them, as being of their Family or Acquaintance: It is very difficult to talk of News, but you will make your self of some Party or other, and of Opinions without giving offence where you did not intend it; and you can scarcely speak of your Governors and Superiors, so as to avoid all imputation either of flattery or pragmaticalness. But here you may talk securely, and have this assurance, That if you profit no Body, you shall hurt no Body; if you do not benefit others, you shall not prejudice your self. And then in the second place, and in consequence of the former, this kind of Discourse will invite no Eves-Droppers to listen and carry Tales of what passed amongst Friends in their Families and Privacies. For

Religious Discourse the most prudent.

although

although there be hardly any place ſo inacceſſible, nor any retirement ſo ſacred and inviolable as to be a ſufficient Sanctuary againſt this peſtilent ſort of Vermin; yet beſides that matters of Religion afford them the leaſt hold or handle, the diſcourſing gravely of it is the moſt effectual Charm in the World to lay them; ſo that they ſhall either not be able, or not be willing to miſreport you. To which add in the third place, That this Courſe is one of the moſt effectual and unexceptionable ways of ridding our ſelves of the Company of impertinent People, which I reckon no ſmall advantage of this kind of Converſation. For this grave and ſerious way will certainly either make them better, or make them weary of our Company; that is, we ſhall either gain them, or gain our time from them; the leaſt of which two is very deſirable, and this is the effect of my ſecond Plea for pious Diſcourſe.

Religious Communication Gentile.

I will trouble you but with one more, and that is from the Gentileneſs of this way of Converſation; it is the moſt humane, civil and obliging way of treating men, and therefore moſt becoming a Gentleman. We account it ſome degree of rudeneſs to talk *French* or *Latin*, or any other Language, which the Company in which we are do not underſtand: for it looks as if we were either jealous of them, and therefore would not have them know what we ſay to others; or elſe it is as if we had a mind to upbraid their ignorance who cannot correſpond with us in ſuch a Tongue. And, methinks, as it is uſually accounted a Piece of Pedantry, and an Argument of defect of generous

nerous Education, for a Student to quote his Authors, to talk in Scholaſtick Phraſe, and to vent his Metaphyſical Notions in the Company of Gentlemen; ſo neither is it very decorous and civil on the other ſide to be talking altogether in the peculiar Phraſe of Faulconry and Hunting in the Company of a Student: And it ſavours either of great defect (of other matter of Diſcourſe) in our ſelves, or of great contempt and inſolence towards thoſe others ſo treated. The Law of Civility is, to be obliging and condeſcending, to give fair play and ſcope to all we converſe with: Now nothing doth this like to religious Diſcourſe, foraſmuch as this being every man's Calling and Concern, there is no man but is, or ought to be preſumed to be in ſome meaſure skilful at it. When we talk of that we talk ſo as we may all talk, we parly of that which every man's profeſſion and Intereſt obliges him to conſider, and which every man's Conſcience admoniſhes him of, and we ſpeak in the true univerſal Dialect which every man underſtands.

And this ſhall be my whole Apology at preſent for religious Conference: I could ſay ſeveral things more in the Caſe, but I will do like a wary Advocate, and reſerve them to reply to your Objections. And now, Dear *Phil*, what think you upon the whole matter?

Phil. What ſhould I ſay, or what can I ſay, but that a good Cauſe hath happened upon a good Advocate, a Cauſe able to make an ordinary man Eloquent, and Eloquence able to make a very indifferent Cauſe paſſable.

Sebaſt. Thank you for nothing, *Phil.* Do you think I will be put off with a ſtale complement?

plement? I have, I think, demonſtrated that religious Diſcourſe is both the moſt manly and rational, the moſt pleaſant and comfortable, the moſt prudent and wary, and to all this the moſt gentile and obliging. Deal now like a Friend and a Gentleman with me; tell me what flaws you have obſerved in my reaſoning, or what Objections you have to what I have ſaid.

Phil. To deal plainly and faithfully with you, and my ſelf too, I think your Reaſons are unanſwerable; and I have nothing to object, but to what you ſaid in the laſt place about the Gentileneſs of this way of Converſation; and that is only this, Methinks you talk in this Particular, as if you came out of a Cloyſter, or rather out of another World; for your Diſcourſe is not calculated for the Age we live in: Alas! the World is not at the paſs you ſuppoſe, you converſe with Books, which fill you with fine Speculations; but had you read men as much as I have done, you would find, as I ſaid before, that it would be a very difficult thing to get any Body to keep you Company at that rate, notwithſtanding all the Arguments you have given or can give for it. You have read (and ſo have I) of one *Nicodemus*, that came to our Saviour on purpoſe to conferr with him on the buſineſs of another World; but it is obſerved he came by Night, as if he was aſhamed of his Enterprize; and beſides, his Name is upon this occaſion (for ought I know) become a by-word and name of reproach to this day. And we have heard of ſome other perſons who in great agonies of mind have been inquiſitive into thoſe Affairs, and made Religion the principal Theme of their Diſcourſe:

courſe: But then was then, and now is now; thoſe men would now be ſuſpected as not well in their wits that affected ſo antick a Garb: inſomuch that even Divines themſelves, who for the honour of their profeſſion, and upon account of the nature of their Office and Studies, may better be allowed to entertain ſuch Diſcourſes; yet (whether it be out of modeſty, or deference to the humour of the Age) it is eaſily obſervable, that they generally decline the way you recommend, and maintain Converſation at the rate of other men. Judge you therefore whether at this time of Day if a man in health ſhould talk ſo, he would not be counted an Hypochondriacal perſon; or eſpecially if a Gentleman ſhould uſe it, he would not be wondred at as uncouth and unfaſhionable.

About Prophane Diſcourſe.

Nay, that is not the worſt of the Caſe neither: For the now modiſh way of treating Religion (if by chance it come in the way) is either to find flaws in it, and by Sceptical Sophiſms to undermine the very foundations of it, or elſe by Drollery to burleſque and render it ridiculous. To talk malapertly and ſcurrilouſly againſt it, and now and then to break a Jeſt upon God Almighty, is an Argument of wit; but to ſpeak gravely and reverently, is dull and tedious beyond meaſure, the ſure ſign of a formal Fop or a Phanatick.

Sebaſt. God forbid! Though I know you underſtand the World better than I do, becauſe (as you wittily upbraided me) my Converſation is moſt with the dead; yet I am in good hope you are now miſtaken, and that the ſtate of the Living is not ſo prodigiouſly bad as you repreſent

ſent it. I know there are a ſort of Tap-inſpired Debauchees (whoſe Wit is broached with the Hogſhead, and runs on tilt with it) that love to put tricks upon every man and every thing that is graver and wiſer than themſelves; nor do I ſo much wonder at it (conſidering the men) foraſmuch as if Religion be true, they muſt expect to be damned; and if it obtain its juſt veneration they muſt expect to be the ſcorn of Mankind. It is not ſtrange therefore if they (conſulting their own intereſt) either undermine it or blaſpheme it, that they may have their revenge upon it before hand. But take courage, *Philander*, for theſe mens tongue is no ſlander, neither upon due conſideration is there more of Wit than of Vertue in their Ribbaldry.

As for the more cunning part of them, who will needs be ſceptical, and think to give proof that they have more Wit than other men, only becauſe they have leſs Faith and Modeſty; who knows not how eaſie a thing it is to carp and make Objections? and that a trifling captious Coxcomb can ask more Queſtions than a wiſe man can anſwer? As any man may pull down faſter than another can build up. It is one ſign of a good judgment to be able to ask a diſcreet and pertinent Queſtion, and another to diſcern what ſatisfaction is fit to be expected; and then in the third place there is ſuch a Vertue as modeſtly to ſit down and reſt ſatisfied with ſuch an Anſwer as the nature of the thing will admit of, all which thoſe captious Hypercriticks are deſtitute of.

And then for the prophane Droll, every man of ſenſe and good manners knows, that

Wit

Wit without Bounds is the very definition of ſcurrillity, and that it is an eaſie thing to pleaſe a Man's ſelf in the one if he have no regard to the other, but will let fly at every thing that comes in his way. For my part, I look upon it as every whit as great an inſtance of dullneſs, as of impiety, to need ſo large a ſcope for Wit as theſe men allow themſelves. A good and true Wit will find matter enough within the Bounds of Sobriety, and not think himſelf ſtraitned though he ſpare God and Religion. The men therefore you ſpeak of are like blind *Bayard*, bold and dull; and if they now and then happen upon ſomething more than ordinary, who knows but the Devil may help them to it, who is always very ready to aſſiſt in this Caſe?

Of Drollery.

Therefore, my good Friend, ſetting both theſe kinds of men aſide, who are not the Copy, but the very Scandal of the Age they live in; let us conſider impartially what elſe there is able to diſcourage ſuch a way of converſing as we are upon. I have made it plain already, that all the reaſon in the World is for it; and it is as certain that there are no Laws againſt it; nor doth Authority ſo much as diſcountenance it in the leaſt. Beſides, there is, I am confident, as quick a ſenſe of Vertue and Piety in the preſent times, as in the beſt times of our Forefathers. And if there be ſome lewd and profligate men againſt it; yet there are others, and thoſe of the beſt Quality, who think it ſo far from unbecoming their Rank, that nothing is more ſavoury and acceptable to them than pious Diſcourſe. And ſome of theſe, as I am informed, meet at one anothers Houſes uſually every Week, or as often as

as their occasions permit, and there whilst they walk in the Garden or sit together by the fire (according as the weather invites them) they make it their business to reinforce upon one anothers minds the great Principles of Christianity, to affect their hearts mutually with the consequences of them. and when this is done (they say) they return home as much raised in their Spirits, and cheered in their very Countenances, as the most jolly Good Fellows do from their merry assignations.

Phil. This is a pretty piece of News you tell me: But I pray you (by the way) do you know any of these men well? Are they not Conventiclers? I tell you plainly I suspect this practice looks asquint that way.

Sebast. No; very far from it I assure you. Those I know of them are persons most observant of the Laws of their Country, constant and devout frequenters of their Parish Church, true friends of the Clergy, zealously affected towards the Common Prayers and all the offices of the Liturgy, and do as much abominate and discountenance every Instance of that factious, Gadding, Gossipping pretence of Godliness, as any sort of men whatsoever do or ought to do; but having a quick sense of Piety and a great concern upon them for another World, they endeavour by the aforesaid means to preserve and improve this temper in themselves, and to propagate it to others; and this they do the more securely, as being condemned by no Law; and the more innocently, as condemning none of those that do not imitate them.

But I do not mention this particular Club of persons with intention to make them a Precedent for all others; for besides that their custom is only voluntarily taken up, and upon no apprehensions of any necessary obligation upon them so to do, for then it would be a great burden upon the Consciences of men, there are also several inconveniences not unlikely to attend the practice, if not prudently managed, which I need not name. That therefore which I aimed at in the mention of these mens usage, was (amongst other proofs) to show that the World was not so abandoned of true zeal and piety as you suggested, that prophane Discourse hath not so universally obtained, nor that godly Conference was so antiquated and exploded; but that a Gentleman might still adventure to be found at it, without impeachment of his prudence or dignity.

And moreover, I humbly conceive, that by how much the more there is of truth in your observation, by so much the more are all serious and sensible men bound to put to their endeavours to turn the stream of Conversation from froth and folly, to this great and important Concern. For if this be out of fashion, the more is the shame; and it is a thousand pities but that we should strive to bring it into fashion, if it were but to run down that prophane humour you speak of. And especially to repair the dishonour done to the Divine Majesty by those scurrilous Libertines, who with equal madness and folly let their tongues run riot against him.

What! shall we be meally-mouth'd in a Good Cause,

Cauſe, when they are impudent in a bad one? Shall we be aſhamed to owne God, when they defie him? Is God ſo inconſiderable a Being, that we dare not ſtand by him? Are Piety and Vertue things to be bluſhed at? Is Eternal Salvation become ſo trivial a thing, that we ſhould be unconcerned about it? Do we yield the Cauſe to theſe half-witted Profligates? Do we acknowledge the Goſpel to be indeed ridiculous? or do we confeſs our ſelves the verieſt Cowards in the World, and judge our ſelves unworthy of Eternal Life? For ſhame let us be ſo far from being either cow'd or byaſs'd by ſuch Examples, that we reſolve to make better where we cannot find them? Why ſhould we think ſo meanly of our ſelves, as to follow only, and not to lead? In a word, Why may not we begin a good faſhion, rather than fall in with a bad one?

More Arguments for religious Conference.

Beſides, I perſwade my ſelf this will be no very hard thing to do if we conſider the Authority and Majeſty of ſincere and generous Piety, and the guilt and baſe ſpiritedneſs of Vice and Prophaneneſs. If we be ſoft and timorous, that grows rampant and intolerable; but if Vertue ſhine out in its own rays, it dazles and baffles all thoſe Birds of Night. If men will be perſwaded to aſſert their own principles manfully, to talk of God worthily and couragiouſly, the verieſt Ruffians will preſently be gagged and tongue tyed; as in Conjurations (they ſay) name but God, and the Devil vaniſhes; ſo enter reſolutely into pious Conference, and it will preſently lay all the Oaths and Blaſ-

phemies and ſcurrilous talk of thoſe deſperate Wretches.

And (by the way) this is the moſt gentile, and alſo the moſt effectual way of reproving that kind of perſons; namely to deal with them as Scholars deal by one another; when any one ſpeaks falſe Latin, they only repeat it after him in true Latin, and as it ought to be; ſo here let us ſpeak right things of God when they ſpeak amiſs, and there needs no more to damp them; they will either turn on your ſide and ſpeak as you do, or leave the Field to you.

This, this, *Philander*, therefore is the only way to mend the World, and without this it will hardly ever be done. It is not good Books and Preaching that will retund a prophane humour; for ſuch perſons will either not read and hear them, or not conſider them; nor is it Prayer and Faſting too that will caſt out this deaf (but not dumb) Devil. But when good men are as bold as evil men are impudent, I mean as openly good as the other are bad, when piety is daring, and (if you will pardon the expreſſion) Hectors lewdneſs out of Countenance; then I ſay, the World will, if not grow devout, yet at leaſt grow modeſt and civil towards Religion, when vertuous men give evidence that they believe themſelves, when they demonſtrate that the Kingdom of God is not in word only, but in power; when their Principles and pretenſions appear in their Spirit, their Diſcourſes, their whole Life and Converſation, when they continually breathe of God and of Heaven.

And (to ſay no more) by this courſe alſo a man

man ſhall gain a worthy reputation and eſteem to himſelf; for whereas a baſhful, puſillanimous, complying humour, that will crouch to a debauch for fear of offence, and faulter and mince the matter of prophaneneſs to curry favour with lewd men, ſhall be deſpiſed and trodden down by every body. A brave generous Aſſerter of his principles, and of God's honour, that fills the place and Company where he is with the ſweet odours of Piety and Devotion, procures himſelf a veneration where ever he goes; he looks like *Moſes* when he came out of the Mount, his face ſhines and all men ſee a glory about him; inſomuch that thoſe that cannot find in their hearts to imitate him, yet cannot chuſe but reverence and admire him.

Phil. I think your mind is an inexhauſtible Fountain of Arguments on this Subject. Every occaſion affords you a freſh tide of Eloquence; either you have very much ſtudied this Point, or it is wonderfully pregnant of its own proofs: For my own part I cannot bear up againſt you. I confeſs I thought when we firſt entered on this particular, it was impoſſible that I ſhould ever be of your opinion therein; but now I am ſo far from having any thing material to object, that I proteſt I am clearly ſatisfied that it would be a very wiſe thing, and well worthy of our endeavours to bring it into uſe and practice: I mean, as much as poſſibly we can to exclude idle Tales and Drollery out of our Converſe, or at leaſt to confine them to a narrower compaſs, and ſo to make way for this great affair of Religion.

But yet let me tell you, though you have con-

vinced me you have not silenced others; there are those will elude the Arguments they cannot answer, and expose what they are resolved not to comply withal: They will say, This talking of Religion is a Mountebank trick to impose upon the people, that it is a design of vain-glory, or an artifice to seem better than we are: They will tell you that sincerely good men use to be modest and silent, and to enjoy their sense of Piety in secret. In short, when you have said all you can to recommend this way of Conversation, they will say it is no better than Puritanism or Phanaticism; and having affixed such a name upon it, they will run both you and it down presently.

Sebast. Hearty thanks, Dear *Phil*, for putting me in mind of that danger which otherwise I should not have been aware of. I acknowledge I am so far unskilled in the World, that I was apt to think it was sufficient to a Cause to be back'd with good Proofs, and that when a business had recommended it self to the Reason and Conscience of men the work was done. I little thought men must be wheedled into a compliance with their own judgments and much less that they would be so disingenuous towards themselves as to put a cheat upon their own senses; nor did I sufficiently consider the power of Names to make good evil, and evil good, and that the best thing in the World may be run down by the mere blast of an odious Nick-name: Lord! what a venemous breath hath Common Fame, that it can change the nature of things? What

Godly Discourse not Phanatical, nor the Badge of any Sect.

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an huge Leviathan is vulgar Opinion, that it ſhould be able to oppoſe it ſelf to the beſt reaſon of Mankind, and to God Almighty too? If this be ſo, who would exerciſe their underſtanding, or dare to propound any generous thing to the World, and not rather ſet himſelf adrift to run with the Tide.

But yet this comforts me, that it looks like a Confeſſion of the inſuperable ſtrength of my Arguments, when men reſort to ſuch ſubterfuges: It is a ſign they dare not encounter me on the ſquare, that uſe ſuch foul play, and that men are deſtitute of reaſon when they betake themſelves to Libels and reproaches.

Let us then reſume a little courage, it may be we ſhall conquer at laſt becauſe our Adverſaries deſpair of an honourable Victory. That which I contend for (you know) is this, That it becomes men to take all fit and fair occaſions to ſpeak worthily of God, and to make advantage of friendly converſation towards the improvement of one another in morals, as well as in ſecular or any other Concerns, and can any one be ſo abſurdly malicious as to call this Phanaticiſm? Doth that deſerve the odious Name of a Party which is the great and univerſal Concern of all Mankind? Is that to be accounted the peculiar *Shibboleth* of a Sect which ſpeaks a Good Man and a Chriſtian? Is that to be made a mark of infamy which the beſt men in the World wear as a Badge of Honour? Are we minded that this word Phanaticiſm ſhould have the power of an Oſtraciſm, and put a diſgrace upon men for being too good.

If men in their Intercourſes and Communi-

cations deliberated about ſetting forth of ſome new God, or at leaſt of ſome new Religion, there were juſt Cauſe of ſuch an odious imputation; but to take opportunity to ſpeak of the true God, and the old Religion gravely and piouſly, it cannot be that this ſhould be Puritaniſm, unleſs it be ſo to be in earneſt in Religion, which God forbid. Sure it is not the Character of any mere Sect amongſt us to love God; and if it be not, then neither can it be ſo to talk of him affectionately, ſince the latter is the eaſie and natural iſſue and expreſſion of the former. *David*, I remember, called his tongue his glory; and is that alone of all the powers of Soul and Body exempted from any part in doing honour to the Creator?

Are all men Puritans when they are ſick or upon their Death Beds? And yet then there are very few are ſo modiſh as to wave the talk of Religion, or to talk lightly and drollingly of it. Either therefore all dying men are Sectaries or elſe they teach us then what we ought to practiſe at other times, if we be not unreaſonably careleſs and deſperate.

As for thoſe that are really Phanatick, and are continually canting in a loathſom manner of Religion, thoſe Parrots, that talk without any ſenſe or apprehenſion of what they ſay, or thoſe Ricketty Phariſees, that are all head and ears and tongue, but feeble in their hands and feet, that talk but do nothing; let theſe be called Puritans or Phanaticks, or what men pleaſe: But let no diſhonour be reflected upon thoſe that underſtand and believe what they ſay, and live up to what they believe and profeſs. For

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though it may pleaſe thoſe who have a mind to put a ſlur upon this inſtance of real Piety which I am vindicating, to confound it with that other hypocritical guiſe of it, which I have now condemned, that ſo they may expoſe it to contempt and diſhonour; yet as it is certain theſe two are as different things as ſenſe and Non-ſenſe, or as Life and Varniſh, ſo (impartial men being Judges) that very Paint and pageantry bears evidence of the excellency of that Sincerity which I am recommending. For you know men do not uſe to counterfeit that which is of no value; painted beauty is a great Argument of the deſirableneſs of that which is true and native; ſo there is certainly a very deſerved admiration of holy Diſcourſe, and a great power and charm in it, otherwiſe it would never be ſo artificially pretended to by ſuch men, nor eſpecially be ſufficient to give countenance (as we find it doth) to their ſiniſter purpoſes and deſigns: The World, I ſay would not be ſo ſottiſh as to be impoſed upon by religious Cant, nor deſigning Hypocrites be ſo ſilly as to go about to abuſe the World this way, if it were not an acknowledged Caſe, that there is a real worth in that which they endeavour apiſhly to imitate. So that the Objections againſt us are unanſwerable Arguments for us, and we have great aſſurance we ſhall carry our Cauſe when our very reproaches turn to our honour.

Godly Conference an effectual way to ſupplant Phanaticiſm.

But what if after all this, *Phil*, I ſhould take the boldneſs to aſſert, that ſuch holy intercourſe as I am ſpeaking of, and eſpecially under thoſe Conditions and Qualifications

Qualifications I have put upon it, is so far from Phanaticism or Puritanism, or any Sectarian *Odium*, that on the contrary (if the practice of it became general amongst good men) it would be the most effectual way in the World to dash those formal disguises out of Countenance, and to put all Phanatical tricks out of all request and reputation. This, I believe, will seem a Paradox to you at first; but I am very confident you will be of my mind when you have considered, That the only, or at least the principal thing which that sort of men support themselves by, is the Gift of tongue, a peculiar knack of talking religiously: For if you look into their lives and temper, they have no advantage of other men; and if you examine either their Principles or their abilities, these will not mend the matter: and yet they have strange authority and influence in the World; they charm men into security of their honesty by their talk, they cast a mist before mens Eyes that they are taken for godly men, let their pride and passion, their covetousness and ambition, be otherwise as palpable and notorious as they can. This Talent of talking is so valuable, it redeems them from suspition, with this Pass Port they go undetected, they are Saints from the teeth outwards, and Fools admire them, and so they compass their ends.

Now were all sincerely good men so sensible of this as they ought to be, and would they in earnest apply themselves to grave and serious and pious Discourse in the habit of their Conversations, these Jack-Daws would be deprived of their borrowed Feathers, and those crafty

crafty men would not have a Mask or Vizard left them to cheat the World withal.

You will say, perhaps they would outshoot those good men in their own bow, and talk at an higher rate in Hypocrisie than the other could do in sincerity. But for answer: Do but consider whether there be not a greater power in Life than in mere shew and pageantry, whether that which proceeds from the thoughts and heart and Principles within be not likely to have more vigour and spirit than that which hath no root, no foundation; but is begotten and lives and dies between the tongue and teeth. Do not you observe that nothing so much disparages a Picture as the presence of him for whom it was drawn? Life hath a thousand vigours and beauties which no hand of the Painter can reach and display. So hath spiritual Life, when it puts forth it self, a spirit, a warmth, an air, or whatsoever you will call it, which cannot be so imitated, but it will shame and detect the Rival. The great mischief of the World therefore, and the only security of Hypocrisie, is, that the Truth and Life disappears, and gives its Counterfeit the Stage intirely to act upon; but let that appear and confront its Adversary, and Hypocrisie will be sensible of an unequal match, and blush or withdraw it self. When, I say, men that feel the power of Religion in their own Souls will be perswaded to express themselves habitually, manly and judiciously, they will baffle and confound all theatrical Pretenders to Religion. And now, *Phil*, what is become of that formidable Objection, as you and I thought it at first? May not we now adventure to talk of

Religion

Religion without the danger of Phanaticiſm?

Phil. Yes, I ſee clearly we may; and not only ſo, but you have now convinced me that for that very reaſon we ought to do it, as the beſt way to ſupplant Phanaticiſm. But at the worſt, if there were ſome danger that I ſhould incur the raſh cenſure of ſome that I value, and were likely to be called Phanatick for my pains, I would not ſtick to ſerve ſo many great and excellent ends at that hazard, if I could.

Sebaſt. Bravely reſolved, my good Friend! now you ſpeak like a man and a Chriſtian; there's the very Point of Vertue: He that is too tender and delicate hath not the courage to be good, and he that will venture nothing here will win nothing in the other World. You know my ſenſe already, that good nature is an excellent and uſeful Companion of Vertue; but as the Caſe may happen, a little moroſity is neceſſary to preſerve them both: But, I pray you, why did you put an *if* at the laſt? after all do you queſtion whether it be poſſible to diſcourſe piouſly?

Phil. No, good *Sebaſtian*, that is not it; for you have convinced me of the feibleneſs, as well as the excellency of that kind of Converſation; but you know (as I have ſaid before) that is out of the road of Diſcourſe; and beſides the difficulty of bringing thoſe one converſes with to it, it is natural for a man to follow his old Biaſs: If I were once entered into ſuch a Communication, I am ſure I ſhould embrace it, and I think I could continue it. But there is a ſheepiſh kind of modeſty in this (as well as in other things) that checks and reſtrains a man from

from beginning that which neither he nor his Companions have been uſed to. If therefore you can help me to conquer my ſelf as well as to anſwer Objections, to overcome my temper as well as to ſubmit my judgment; I would then ſet about it as well as I could.

Sebaſt. With all my heart; only with this Condition; as well as I can (as you ſay.) But I pray give me leave to ask you a Queſtion by the bye, and not decline that which you have put to me; the Caſe is this, It is commonly obſerved that good men find ſuch a modeſty (as you ſpeak of) to reſtrain them when they are ſetting themſelves to begin ſome good Diſcourſe; inſomuch that ſometimes with very great Difficulty (if at all) they can ſcrew themſelves up to it; but contrarywiſe, lewd and prophane men rant and hector at an intolerable rate, they will blaſpheme and burleſque Religion when they are in their humour without regard to God and man: Now ſeeing the former have all the reaſon in the World on their ſide, and the other as much againſt them, what is it that makes this difference in their ſpirit and temper?

Phil. That I may come the ſooner at the ſolution of my own difficulty, I will anſwer your Queſtion as briefly as I can; and I think it may be reſolved into theſe ſeveral Cauſes, firſt, prophane men are generally very groſly ignorant; for I cannot imagine that any thing elſe ſhould make them bold with God Almighty. And though they pretend to wit, yet a man to their own tooth hath

What makes prophane men ſo bold in their aſſaults upon Religion.

hath told us, That a certain Dose of that thing called Wit is a necessary ingredient into the Composition of a very ridiculous Fool. And I have heard it hath been said by a better man than he, That a smattering in knowledge (which is the measure of a Wit) disposes men to Atheism, whereas a full proportion would carry them through to the sense of God and Religion. The second Cause I assign is, That these men having abandoned Vertue, they have therewith lost all good nature and civil respect; and are delivered up to insolence and an affronting humour. And thirdly, I make no great doubt but the Devil, whose work they do, assists them in it. And now you will easily think there needs no other concurrence; yet I will add another, and that is Drunkenness: For methinks it should be out of the power of the Devil himself to tempt a sober man to such a Villainy; but in the rage of Drink God is defied, and every thing that is sacred. But now to my Question.

Sthaft. First, *Phil*, let me kiss your hands for your ingenious Answer to my Query; and then in the second place, I wish I could answer yours as well. The plain truth is (as I have acknowledged to you before) I have been in that Oven, and therefore cannot wonder to find another man there; and though I cannot always conquer my bashfulness, yet in such Cases I always endeavour it, and I will tell you by what methods, and so I hope the same remedies may relieve us both.

First then when I enter into Company with design to engage them in good Discourse, I endeavour,

deavour, if it be poſſible, to make ſome Friend privy to my Plot, who perhaps ſhall ſit at ſome diſtance from me, but underſtanding his Cue ſhall be always ready to ſecond me in what I undertake; and ſo by an honeſt Confederacy we can carry on the buſineſs. And this I do eſpecially if I apprehend the Company to conſiſt either of prophane Perſons or captious Wits. For if a modeſt man ſhould in ſuch a Caſe begin an unuſual Diſcourſe, and have no body to follow him, he will not only miſcarry of his purpoſe, but be abaſhed and confounded. But if he have one prepared to comply with him, they ſhall both have time to recollect themſelves, and to carry the Ball of Diſcourſe whither they pleaſe.

In the next place, *when* I am deſtitute of the aſſiſtance of ſuch an Aſſociate to ſecond and relieve me, then if I apprehend I have an opportunity of diſcourſing uſefully, I reſolve to begin whatever come of it, that is, I forcibly break ſilence, though it be with trembling and paleneſs and faultering and without any well contrived expreſſions: And when once the Ice is broken the worſt is paſt, then preſently my colour and ſpeech and ſpirits will return again. For to proceed is very eaſie then, becauſe, as I have noted before, the Objects of Religion lie ſo ready to a mans thoughts that he cannot be at a loſs in the Sequel of his Diſcourſe.

Means to raiſe our Spirits to a fit temper for religious Communication.

In order hereto I endeavour to raiſe in my own heart a great zeal of God's Glory, and a generous deſign of doing good to thoſe I converſe with.

with. And therefore I think with my ſelf I am not only to ſtand upon my guard and ſecure my ſelf from infection, nor much leſs to be a mere Negative, and content my ſelf to do no hurt to my Acquaintance, but that it is expected from me I ſhould benefit them, and ſeaſon their intercourſe with ſomething vertuous and graceful.

Moreover, I endeavour in the whole Conduct of my ſelf, and the habit of my life, to arrive at a ſerioufneſs of ſpirit and a deepneſs of thought, without which neither ſhall I be in temper to begin or carry on any ſuch weighty Diſcourſe with others, nor will they expect it from me; a light trifling jeſting Spirit is good for nothing but ſport and may-game. Such as can ordinarily find in their hearts to ſtep aſide to a quibble or a clinch, are generally men ſo unfit for Religion, that they are ſeldom uſeful to themſelves in any ſecular buſineſs: But a ſerious man hath his thoughts about him, and his very mein and countenance raiſes the expectation of the Company, and ſo they are half prepared to receive his impreſſions. Now to bring my ſelf to this temper, I often repreſent to my ſelf God's Omnipreſence, and that I am before a mighty, wiſe and moſt reverend Majeſty, who takes notice of all my carriage and demeanour. I think frequently of the Judgment to come and the wonderful accuracy and ſolemnity of it, of the unſpeakable concerns of Hell and Heaven, and the whole affair of another World. By theſe Conſiderations I curb the levity and wantonneſs of my ſpirit, and ſo become both furniſhed with fit thoughts to communicate,

municate, and alſo with a proper temper to communicate them.

Beſides this, I make it my earneſt endeavour to be as much above the World as I can, I mean to have as indifferent an eſteem of Riches and Fame, *&c.* as is poſſible, that my heart may not eagerly and intently run upon them: For I find by woful experience, that whenſoever it warps that way, I am ſure to be liftleſs and formal in any ſuch enterprize as we are ſpeaking of; but whenſoever I can contemn them, then I am as it were all ſpirit, and have ſo lively impreſſes of another World upon me, that I can almoſt make it viſible to my Companions.

Amongſt all theſe I pray daily and earneſtly for God's Grace and Aſſiſtance, that he will every where be preſent to me by his Holy Spirit, and put uſeful thoughts into my heart, and give me courage to expreſs them, ſo as to beget the like in others.

This, Sir, is the method I take with my ſelf; and having, I thank God, often ſucceeded well with it againſt a Cowardly heart of my own, I cannot but expect it will have greater and more ſignal effects upon you.

Phil. God verifie the Omen. However, I thank you moſt heartily for the Receipt, which I will keep as long as I live.

Sebaſt. But I pray, Good *Phil*, do not make it publick; for though I envy no Body the benefit of my Experience, yet I would be loth the World ſhould know what a ſhameful Diſeaſe I have been ſick of.

Phil. O Sir, timidity is but a natural infirmity, and hath not much ſhame attending it: But

I must tell you, as my Confessor or Physician, which you will, of another Disease I labour under, so shameful and scandalous, that scarce any Body will owne it, and that is Ignorance; if I had courage enough for the business (we have all this while been speaking of) yet I am afraid by my unskilfulness I shall spoil all: let me therefore pray you to afford me your advice in this Case also.

Sebast. Fear it not, *Phil*, a Man of your cheerful countenance, sprightly vigour, and benignity of temper, can never labour under any such Disease.

Phil. Good *Sebastian* be not too secure of me; for this is a business of that nature, that unless it be done gracefully it had better be let alone, and especially because the Enterprize is somewhat new and unusual; therefore the greater dexterity and management is required, to give it a good appearance at its setting out, and so to lay a foundation for its coming into common use and reputation: and besides, it concerns you in point of your own credit to furnish me out well, for seeing it is you only that have put me upon it, the dishonour will redound to you, if I miscarry in the undertaking.

Sebast. In earnest, Sir, and without a Complement, you are known to be a Man of so good Parts that you can never want Materials, and then your sweetness of address will not fail to give great advantage and acceptation to your Discourses. Now it is an hard thing, that because you are pleased to think me Wise, therefore I must shew my self to be a Fool; but that's a small matter between Friends: Therefore since you

you will have it ſo, I will tell you the effect of my Obſervation in this matter.

Prudential advices about religious Conference.

And the firſt thing to our purpoſe which I remark is, the Example of our Saviour (and who can we better learn of?) And he, I obſerve, had a dexterity of applying every accidental occurrence to his holy Purpoſes, as it were by a kind of Chymiſtry ſeparating the groſs Matter, and ſubliming ordinary Affairs to Heavenly Doctrine: Inſomuch, that there was ſcarcely any common Affair of Life, ſuch as Eating or Drinking, or Recreation, no Diſeaſe or Infirmity of the Body, no Trade and Occupation, ſuch as Merchandice or Husbandry, no Building or Planting, Plowing or Sowing, nay not ſo mean Employments as Womens leavening their Bread, grinding at the Mill, or ſweeping an Houſe, but he ſpiritualized them and applied them to his deſigns.

Now if we would learn of him, and endeavour to imitate this dexterity, we might with great eaſe, and without all violence ſurprize men into Religion: and not only at every turn introduce pious Diſcourſe, but render the Subject of it intelligible to the meaneſt Capacities, and withal by thoſe ſenſible reſemblances give ſuch lively touches upon the minds of Men, as that what we delivered upon thoſe occaſions would ſtick and remain with them.

And there is no great pains or skill required for the doing of this, the principal requiſite to it is a zeal of God's Glory, and ſuch a conſtant and fixed Eye upon it as ſhall make us apprehenſive of the opportunities that preſent themſelves,

ſelves, and then a little humility to condeſcend to the weakneſs of People; which two things preſuppoſed, a very ſmall exerciſe of phancy would draw the Parallels, and make the application, as any Man will quickly find that will ſet himſelf about it.

As for inſtance, when we viſit a ſick Friend or Neighbour, what a fair opportunity have we to diſcourſe of the Immortality of the Soul, and what an eaſie tranſition is it from a Phyſician to a Saviour? Or why may we not as well cheer up our afflicted Friend with the comforts of Religion, as well as amuze or divert him with impertinent Stories? Or ſuppoſe Friends be together, and diſpoſed to be merry, why may not ſome word come in ſeaſonably of the Everlaſting Friendſhips in Heaven, or of the continual Feaſt of a good Conſcience? Why may not the common Chat about News be elevated to the conſideration of the good tidings of the Goſpel? What hinders but our Diſhes of Meat may be ſeaſoned with a gracious word or two about the Food of our Souls? When Men are talking of Old Age, it would be no great ſtrain if thence our thoughts riſe up to Eternal Life. Nor any great flight of phancy is requiſite to improve all the accidents of our lives to the contemplation of Divine Providence, which orders and governs them. In a word, every thing is capable of improvement if we be not wanting; we ſhall never want opportunity if we embrace it; any thing will ſerve an intent Mind and a devout Heart to theſe purpoſes.

My ſecond remark is, upon the Cuſtom of thoſe ſeveral Perſons in the Goſpel, that upon divers

divers occasions entered into Conference with our Saviour, which I note they always began by way of Question or Doubt, as Men desirous to be informed, rather than affecting to teach or dictate. This was not only the way of *Nicodemus*, *Joh.* iij. of the Woman of *Samaria*, *Joh.* iv. and of the young Rich Man, *Matth.* xix. who came in earnest to be instructed; but of the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadduces, who came to dispute: And indeed I have heard, this modest way of propounding a Question, and expecting and replying to the Answer, was the old way of Disputation. And certainly this is of great use in our Case, for the more easie and acceptable introduction of the serious matters of Religion into ordinary Conversation. When we do not violently break in upon the Company, but civilly make our way; not abruptly obtrude our Sentiments, but insinuate them; not malapertly reprove other Mens Errors, or supercilliously dictate our own Opinions; not fall upon Preaching, or throw down our Gauntlet, and challenge the Company to a Combate: But modestly appear in the Garb of Learners, and propound a Case, as to Men wiser than our selves, for our own satisfaction. This course, instead of offending, exceedingly obliges those we apply our selves to; forasmuch as every Man is glad to be accounted Wise and fit to be consulted with.

As suppose you should ask the Persons you are with, what they think of such or such an Argument for the Immortality of the Soul, or for the proof of a particular Providence; or ask their advice how to answer such an Objection

that comes in your way againſt either of thoſe, or any other fundamental Point of Religion: And though ſuch Queſtions may at firſt ſeem merely ſpeculative, yet if they be purſued wiſely and with that intention, they will infallibly lead to practice.

Or ſuppoſe you put a Caſe about Temperance, as namely, What are the Rules and Meaſures of Sobriety, ſo as alſo to avoid ſcrupulóſity; How far is Worldly care evil and vicious, and how far innocent and allowable; What is the predicament of careleſs and common Swearing, and what kind of ſins it is reducible to.

Or more generally, How a Man may diſcern his own proficiency in Vertue, and what preparation of a Man's ſelf is ſtatly neceſſary againſt the uncertainty of Life, and to ſecure the great ſtake of an intereſt in another World.

Or, to name no more, What the Company thinks of ſuch or ſuch a paſſage in a Sermon you lately heard, or in ſuch a Book. Theſe and a thouſand more ſuch eaſie inlets there are into good Diſcourſe without imputation of pragmaticalneſs, and which a little preſence of mind will improve to what purpoſes we deſire.

Another thing that I have obſerved in order to this Affair is, what I have learned from the Cuſtom of prudent Men, to inſinuate that by a Story which would not be ſo well received if it were directly and bluntly delivered. Telling of Stories, you know is a common Theme of Converſation, and if a Man have any graceful way of telling them, and eſpecially uſe any prudence in the choice of them; he hath the Com-

pany

pany in his power, and may lead them to what Diſcourſe he will: And beſides, Men will admit of that to be ſaid in the third Perſon which they will not bear in the ſecond.

Now to this purpoſe ſuppoſe a Man ſhould have in readineſs a Story of ſome remarkable Judgment of God upon ſome notorious Sin, that he would by no means deterr thoſe he converſes with from, no Body could take offence at the Story, and yet every Man's Conſcience would make application of it. Or ſuppoſe a Man ſhould in lively Colours deſcribe ſome excellent Perſon, he would not only put all the Hearers into the thoughts of thoſe Vertues that were ſo deſcribed; but ſtir up jointly a modeſt ſhame in them for their own ſhortneſs, and an Emulation of ſo brave an Example. But to be ſure he ſhall hereby give himſelf an Introduction (without affectation) of diſcourſing of which ſoever of thoſe eminent Vertues he pleaſes. Theſe and many ſuch other ways there are, which your own Prudence and Obſervation will repreſent to you better than I can; by which a diſcreet Perſon may engage any Company (in which it is fit for an honeſt Man to be found) in good Diſcourſe.

But I will not omit upon this occaſion to tell you a Story, which I have from very good hands, of two very eminent Men, both for Learning and Piety, in the laſt Age (or rather the beginning of the preſent) the one of them a great Prelate (indeed a Primate) and the other a Church-man of great Note and Preferment. Theſe two great Men, as they often met together to conſult the Intereſt of Learning, and the Affairs of the Church, ſo when they had di-

patched that, they ſeldom parted from one another without ſuch an encounter as this: Come, Good Doctor (ſaith the Biſhop) let us now talk a little of Jeſus Chriſt; Or, on the other ſide, ſaid the Doctor, Come, my Lord, let me hear your Grace ſpeak of the goodneſs of God with your wonted Piety and Eloquence; let us warm one anothers Hearts with Heaven, that we may the better bear this cold World. I cannot tell you the words that paſſed between them, nor can you expect it from me; but I am ſufficiently aſſured of the Matter of Fact. And this they performed with that holy reverence and ardent zeal, with that delightful ſenſe and feeling, that afforded matter of admiration to thoſe of their Friends or Servants that happened to be preſent, or to over-hear them. Here is now an Example of holy Conference without a Preface, and yet without exception; a Precedent not only juſtifying all I have ſaid, but eaſie to imitate where-ever there is a like Spirit of Piety: a few ſuch Men would put prophaneneſs out of Countenance, and turn the tide of Converſation.

Phil. Shall I crave of you to tell me the names of thoſe two Perſons?

Sebaſt. Their names are ſo well known, that I think you might ſpare the Queſtion; but they were *U*—— and *P*——

Phil. I gueſs who you mean, and I would to God there were more of them. I doubt I ſhall never be able to imitate, but I am reſolved to write after ſo fair a Copy as well as I can: therefore I pray you, if you have any further directions for the guiding of my hand, let me have them.

Sebaſt.

Sebaſt. I ſee you are in earneſt; God's Bleſſing on your heart for it. All that I have to ſay, or (as I think) can be ſaid more, may be ſummed up in theſe four following Cautions:

Firſt, You muſt remember that (which was ſaid before) you are not always to be endeavouring a Diſcourſe of Religion; other Diſcourſe, ſo it be manly and pertinent, is not only lawful, but neceſſary in its ſeaſon. The wiſe Man tells us there is a time for all things; to overdo is to do nothing to the purpoſe; and to exclude all other innocent and ingenious Converſe for the ſake of Religion, is to make Religion irkſome, and the certain way to ſhut it quite out of the World.

Secondly, Becauſe religious Conference is not always a Duty, therefore it is a peculiar ſeaſon and opportunity that makes it at any time become ſo, and conſequently that is to be watched and laid hold upon. My meaning is, that when Men are in drink or in paſſion, it is no fit time to enter on this Subject, for it will be but to caſt Pearls before Swine; it can do thoſe perſons no good at ſuch times, and it may do us hurt and Religion too. But when Men are in the calmeſt and ſobereſt Moods, then is the only time for this intercourſe.

Thirdly, It is very adviſeable that we make a diſtinction of Perſons, as well as times, for this buſineſs. You know the World is not all of a ſize, ſome are our Superiors, others are our Inferiors or Equals; there are ſome very acute and learned Men, ſome dull and ignorant; ſome are captious, others ſincere and plain-hearted; ſome prophane, and others pious; in a word, there are

are old and young, rich and poor, cheerful and melancholy, and abundance other ſuch differences in Mens circumſtances: All which require a peculiar Addreſs, if we intend to faſten any good thing upon them. But of this I need ſay no more, knowing to whom I ſpeak.

Again, fourthly, it is a matter of Prudence that our Eſſays of this kind be rather perfective than deſtructive; that is, that we do not take upon us authoritatively to quaſh and controul other Diſcourſe, but rather take advantage of any occaſional paſſages and hints, from whence to improve and raiſe it inſenſibly to that we would be at.

Laſtly, That out of indulgence to the levity, and in compliance with the curioſity of Mens Minds, we ſhould not always harp upon one String; but ſometimes deſignedly lay aſide our buſineſs, and then reſume it again, as in Muſick to ſing and let fall a Note, and by and by get it up again; that by ſuch variety we may afford the more delightful Entertainment to thoſe that are our Companions. And now, I doubt, I have quite tired you; therefore it is time to bid you a good Night.

Phil. Dear *Sebaſtian*, ſhall I tell you a plain truth? When we firſt came together this Evening, your Converſation methought was ſo much out of the Mode, that though I conſidered you as an honeſt Gentleman, yet I ſuſpected I ſhould have uneaſie Company with you: But now I phanſie you are like ſome of thoſe old ſtately Buildings I have ſeen, which are a little rough and weather-beaten without, but for all that are ſubſtantially ſtrong, and expreſs very admirable

rable Art within; or, as I have heard it was ſaid of *Socrates*, that he was like Apothecaries Boxes, that had the Picture of an Ape, a Satyr, or perhaps a Serpent without ſide, but contained excellent Medicaments: So you, that I feared would be my Diſeaſe, have been my Phyſician; and, which is more, have ſet me up for one too.

Sebaſt. Nay then good Night again, if you be for Complements: But if you have any real value for me, I hope you will now do me the favour of your Company at my Houſe ſome other Evening.

Phil. Never doubt it, Sir, your dead Men ſhall ſcarcely haunt you more than I will do. But good Night heartily.

The End of the Firſt Conference.

A

Winter-Evening

CONFERENCE.

PART II.

Prov. xxvij. 17.

As Iron ſharpeneth Iron, ſo doth the countenance of a Man his friend.

1 Cor. xv. 33.

Evil communications corrupt good manners.

A

Winter-Evening

CONFERENCE.

PART II.

A Second Winter-Evening CONFERENCE AT THE House of *SEBASTIAN.*

The ARGUMENT of the Second CONFERENCE.

In the former Conference, Sebaſtian *having convinced* Philander *of the great importance of Religion, and the Wiſdom of making it as well the Subject of Social Communication as of retired Meditation: Accordingly they two meet on purpoſe this ſecond time to conferr about it. But* Biophilus, *a ſceptical Perſon, being in their Company, he at firſt diverts them from their deſign by other Diſcourſe; till after a-while, under the diſguiſe of News, he is wheedled into this Subject before he was a-ware: And then he puts them upon the Proof of thoſe Principles which they would have ſuppoſed. Upon this occaſion the Foundations of Religion are ſearched into, and particularly that great Point concerning* A Judgment to come, *is ſubſtantially proved:*

Which

Which being done, and Biophilus *thereby rendred somewhat more inclinable to be serious, they then pursue their first intentions, and discourse warmly and sensibly of another World, and of the necessary Preparations for it, so long tell they not only inflame their own Hearts with Devotion, but strike some sparks of it into* Biophilus *also.*

Philander. YOu see, *Sebastian*, I am as good as my promise; and at this time so much better, as I have brought my Neighbour *Biophilus* along with me.

Sebast. I always took you for a Man of your word; but now you have not only acquitted your self, but obliged me.

Biophilus. Your humble Servant, Good *Sebastian*: I know you are a studious Person; yet I thought Company would not be unacceptable to you, at this Season.

Sebast. You are heartily welcome, Sir: I love my Books well, but my Friends better. Come, Gentlemen, will it please you to draw near the Fire? the Whether is very sharp still.

Phil. The cold continues: But, thanks be to God, the Evenings are not so tedious since I saw you last.

Bioph. How can that be, *Philander?* The Weather indeed may change on a sudden, and become colder or warmer upon several accidents; but seeing the Sun keeps his constant Course, the *interim* of a few days can make no discernible difference in the length or shortness of the Evenings.

Phil. O but here is a Friend hath taught me an Art, for that, a way to make time long or shorter

ſhorter at pleaſure, nay (which perhaps will encreaſe your wonder) both theſe ſeeming Contraries ſhall be coincident. A Man ſhall have more time to ſpend, and leſs to ſpare; more for his uſe and pleaſure, and none to be a burden to him. *Of improvement of time.*

Bioph. Can Art do that? That is a noble skill indeed, (if it be poſſible) to ſhorten a Man's time, and yet prolong his Life. Sure you ſpeak Riddles; however, I pray, make me Partaker of the myſtery.

Phil. Good Neighbour, there is no other Secret in it but this: Good Company and profitable Converſation redeem time from folly and impertinency, and ſo we really live longer, and they alſo ſpend the time very pleaſantly, and ſo our lives ſeem to be the ſhorter.

Bioph. That's pretty, I confeſs, but I had rather it had been literally true.

Sebaſt. I believe *Biophilus* remembers a Proverbial Saying they have in *Italy* to this purpoſe, *He that would have a ſhort Lent, let him borrow Money to be repaid at Eaſter.* So he that forecaſts the Account which every Man muſt one day make, how he hath expended the time of this Life, will not be apt to think the term of it to be overlong. And he on the other ſide who improves his time as he ought, and hath his Accounts in readineſs, will not think the Day of reckoning too ſoon or ſudden.

Bioph. Very good again: But nevertheleſs, with your pardon, Gentlemen, I ſhould argue the quite contrary from your Premiſes. For if there be a Judgment to come (as you are pleaſed to ſuppoſe) *A touch of Epicurean Doctrine.*

ſuppoſe) and that a man muſt render an account of all his actions another day; This, methinks, ſhould curdle all his delights, and the very thoughts of ſuch a thing filling him with perpetual fears and ſollicitude about it, muſt needs make Life very tedious to him. But if there be no ſuch thing to be feared hereafter, then Life will ſeem ſhort, becauſe it will be ſweet and comfortable: and then alſo a man ſhall in effect live a great while in a little time, when there is nothing to diſturb his thoughts, to impeach his pleaſures or interrupt the enjoyment of himſelf.

Phil. Yes, even in the Caſe which you put, Death will be ſure to come ſhortly, and that will ſpoil his ſport.

Bioph. that is very true and very ſad: If therefore you could find out a remedy for that you would do ſomething to purpoſe. But whenas you cannot but obſerve that there are ſeveral ſorts of Brute Creatures that out-live Mankind, (I mean though they know not what it is to live, yet) they continue longer in the World, and have as well a quicker ſenſe of pleaſure, as a more unlimited and uncontrolled enjoyment of it; in both which reſpects we have too great cauſe to envy their happineſs. If Mankind after all this muſt be perpetually tormented too with ſuſpicions of what may come after, they are doubly miſerable, and under the hardeſt fate of all Creatures.

Sebaſt. That very thing which you now obſerve, is to me a very great Argument of what you oppoſe. For upon thoſe very conſiderations, *viz.* that the Life of man in this World is ſhorter than that of ſome other leſs conſiderable Creatures,

Creatures, and that the pleaſure thereof is interrupted alſo by the expectation of the future; upon thoſe very grounds (ſay I) there is great reaſon to believe that there is ſuch a thing as another World wherein he may have amends made him for whatever was amiſs or defective here. For it is not credible with me that ſuch power and wiſdom as is plainly diſplay'd in the Conſtitution of Man, ſhould be ſo utterly deſtitute of Goodneſs, as to contrive things ſo ill, that the nobleſt Being ſhould be finally the moſt unfortunate.

To which I muſt add, that therefore the apprehenſion of ſuch a Judgment to come as we ſpeak of, neither is nor can be mere matter of dread and horrour, (as you ſeem to ſuppoſe) but is either terrible or comfortable, reſpectively to Mens preparations for it: I cannot wonder if the thoughts of it do ſo fright and diſcompoſe evil Men, ſo that they could with all their hearts wiſh there was no ſuch thing. But moſt certainly to wiſe and vertuous Men, it is ſo far from being formidable, that contrariwiſe the hope of it is the very joy of their hearts, the ſupport of their Spirits, their greateſt ſecurity againſt all the croſs accidents of this World, and in a word their Port and Sanctuary.

Of the different proſpects different men have of the other World.

Bioph. Theſe are fine ſayings, *Sebaſtian*; but when you have ſaid all you can, and made the beſt of the Caſe, when it comes to the proof, I do not find men in love with dying, nor to have ſo comfortable an opinion of that other World you ſpeak of; but that they could with all their hearts be content to quit their in-

tereſt in the latter, ſo they might put off the former. I remember once when I was preſent at an Execution, amongſt the reſt of condemned Malefactors, there was one who either was ſo ſecure of his own Innocency, or ſo confident of the ſufficiency of his preparations for Death, or, which I rather ſuſpect, ſo elevated and tranſported with the Harangues of the Prieſt, that he ſeemed to long for his near approaching end, and pretended he would not exchange his condition for that of any of the Spectators there preſent: But by and by comes the ſurprizing News of a Pardon or Reprieve, and the poor Man was ready to leap out of his skin for joy.

And I have often obſerved Men, who when they have been deſperately ſick, and paſt all hopes of Life, then (as it is uſual with Men in danger of drowning to catch hold of any thing that offers it ſelf for their ſupport) to ſet a good face on the matter, and (as we ſay) make a Vertue of Neceſſity, and welcome the approach of Death with ſeeming courage and conſtancy: But in this juncture, let but a Phyſician appear that gives them any hopes of Recovery, they preſently ſtart back from the brink of another World, as from an horrible Precipice, and ſmile upon the Meſſenger that brings the good tidings of Life. I cannot ſee therefore that Men do indeed believe themſelves in this matter.

Sebaſt. There is no doubt, *Biophilus*, but that (as you ſay) ſome Men may talk only, and ſet a good face upon that which they have no comfortable ſenſe of. And no wonder if ſuch Mens courage fails them when they have moſt uſe of it: for it is not imaginable that it ſhould

ſhould be eaſie to brazen it out againſt Death. But this is no more reproach to true Faith in God and hopes of another World, than it is to generous Courage and Valour, that now and then you ſhall ſee an huffing ſwaggering Hector turn recreant when he is put to it in earneſt. It is acknowledged to be very eaſie to brag and vapour when no danger is near; but it requires real bravery to ſtand to it when a Man is briskly encountered: Now as you will not ſay there is no ſuch thing as Valour, becauſe there are ſome Cowards that pretend to it; ſo neither (I preſume) will you think fit to ſuppoſe there is no Faith, becauſe there is ſome Hypocriſie.

Beſides, if you were as well ſatisfied as I am or pretend to be of the truth of that we are diſcourſing upon, namely, of another World; yet your experience of the common courſe of Mens lives would force you to acknowledge, that even amongſt thoſe that do profeſs to believe ſuch a thing, there are but very few who appear to be habitually well prepared for ſo great a Tryal; and therefore no wonder if ſuch Perſons be ſomewhat ſtartled and diſcompoſed at an immediate Summons, and could be very glad to have further day given them to make up ſo great an Account. For however a tolerable courſe of living may make a ſhift to ſupport a Man's hopes whilſt Death is looked upon at a diſtance; yet when it comes to the Point, that a Man muſt die indeed, it is very reaſonable to expect that ſuch Men we now ſpeak of ſhould be not a little ſollicitous in ſuch a concern, where they know the miſcarriage is fatal, and the beſt proviſion poſſible will be little enough.

But notwithſtanding all this, there are certainly, and have been ſundry Perſons in the World, who though they have had the ſame natural affection to themſelves, and to the preſent life with others, yet have as heartily wiſhed and longed for the Great Day, as it was lawful for them to do. They know it is their Duty to maintain the ſtation God hath ſet them in, till they have a fair diſmiſſion; but bating that conſideration, I doubt not but many a Good Man would ſue out his *Quietus eſt*, and gladly embrace an opportunity of bidding farewel to the World.

Bioph. You ſay well; but how ſhall this Caſe be decided? Where may a Man find any ſuch Perſon as you ſpeak of?

Heroes that can deſpiſe Death.

Sebaſt. Perhaps you have not heard any Man ſing his *Nunc dimittis*; or if you had, it may be you would not have believed him to be in earneſt: But what think you of St. *Paul*, who profeſſes *he deſires to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt?* And particularly, 2 *Tim.* iv. 7. he foreſees a violent Death approaching him, and upon that occaſion he by way of Contemplation places himſelf, as it were, upon a Promontory, where he could look backward and forward, and take a view of both Worlds; and when he reflects upon that which he was leaving, he finds that he had diſcharged his part well and worthily, whilſt he was in it; *I have fought the good fight* (ſaith he) *I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith.* But then when he looks forward and takes a proſpect of what was to come, here he triumphs and exults with joy, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of righteouſneſs, which God*

God the righteous Judge ſhall give me: As if he ſaid, "I know no cauſe that I ſhould ei-"ther be aſhamed to live, or afraid to die; I "have no reaſon to be very fond of life, "who have met with ſo many Afflictions in it, "yet I that have born them ſo undauntedly hi-"therto, can have as little reaſon to leave the "World now in a pet of impatience: But "upon the whole matter, I ſee great advan-"tage on the other ſide, and the other World "is as much better than the preſent, as Har-"veſt is than Labour, as Victory than Battle, "and as being at home than in Travel and on a "Journey.

Or what do you think of ſo many Thouſand Martyrs, who have not only gone out of the World with Smiles in their Faces, and Songs in their Mouths, but have choſen Death when they might have lived as freely, as happily, and as long as other Men: They were not worn out with Age, nor vexed and wearied with Poverty, nor diſtracted by any diſaſter; they had as tender and ſenſible Conſtitutions as other Men, as much natural affection to themſelves, and as ſound reaſon to judge what was beſt, and yet deſpiſed the preſent Life and World in compariſon of that to come.

Bioph. Nay, as for thoſe Men of old, which you ſpeak of, I cannot tell what to make of them: But I would fain ſee ſuch a Man now.

Sebaſt. I make no Queſtion but I could direct you to ſuch Men now; but it may be you will not believe they deſpiſe Death, becauſe you ſee them yet living; however, what think you of the Man that hath the bravery to deny himſelf thoſe profits and pleaſures which other Men al-

low themſelves, (ſo long as they ſee no infamy or external danger attend them) what think you of the Man that dares to be vertuous in a lewd Age and in evil Company, and hath the courage and proweſs to confront a whole World with his Example? What think you of the Man that ſits ſo looſe to the World, that he can bear Proſperity without being ſupercilious, and Adverſity without being dejected; that can be in want without repining, and can be liberal without upbraiding? Or, to ſay no more, What think you of the Man that ſcorns to crouch and ſneak, and paraſitically to humour and flatter others for his ſecular intereſt or ſecurity? Such Men as theſe are to be found in the preſent Age; and where ever you find any ſuch Man, aſſure your ſelf there is a Perſon that believes himſelf, or rather that believes in God, and hath as real a perſwaſion of the World to come, as other Men have of that which they ſee with their Eyes, and touch with their Fingers.

Bioph. I believe there are ſome ſuch Men as you ſpeak of, and I do account them brave and worthy perſons; but theſe inſtances come not up to the Point, foraſmuch as ſome of theſe will quail at the approach of Death as well as other Men.

Sebaſt. It may happen ſo, that a vertuous Man may be a little diſcompoſed at the rude aſſaults of Death, and yet without any blemiſh either to his Faith or Vertue: For in the firſt place, you know all Men have a natural love of Life, and an abhorrence of Death, and from hence may proceed ſome ſudden reluctances, becauſe it is neither within the power of reaſon, nor is it the Office of Religion, utterly to exterminate

nate and extinguish these first motions; but to subdue and govern them, so as that a Man may (after some conflict) pursue the choice of his mind notwithstanding them, and this latter you shall see them perform.

And then besides, you know there are some Men of more timorous natures than others, insomuch that a great measure of Vertue will not do the same thing in such, as a lesser proportion, assisted by hardiness of temper, will do in others. For Nature will be Nature still; and therefore you shall observe that even amongst those that have no apprehension of any thing to come after Death (if we may believe themselves) and so consequently can have no cause of fear; yet will be found those that are as timorous as those that expect a Judgment to come, witness your Friend Mr. *H.*

Moreover, you cannot but be aware that a violent Disease, or Pain, or any of those Forerunners of Death, do ordinarily infeeble the Operations of the Mind, as well as of the Body, and disorder Mens Reason so, that it is hard to pronounce of Mens prowess by the Combat they then maintain; therefore the surest way of deciding this matter, is that which I directed you to before; namely, when you see a Man in his full strength, voluntarily and understandingly, do that which will certainly draw Death after it, this hath certainly more bravery and self-denial in it, more contempt of Life and the World, and more argument of hopes in another World, than can be drawn from the contingencies in the very agony of Death.

Bioph. Well, perhaps it may be so: But for God's sake, Gentlemen, let us wave this uncomfortable

of News; and News-mongers expoſed.

comfortable Subject. Come, what good News is their ſtirring?

Phil. O Sir, that is a prohibited Commodity you enquire for, neither of us deal in it.

Bioph. Nay, truly for my part I wiſh it had been prohibited ſooner; for there hath been ſo much Knavery and Sophiſtication in it, that ſeveral well meaning Men have been cheated of their Peace, their Loyalty, and almoſt out of their Wits too by it.

But ſo long as we are not bound to believe all that we hear, we may hear what Men talk of, for our diverſion.

Sebaſt. Hearing and telling of News ſeems to me to be juſt ſuch another diverſion as tipling is. And it is much the ſame thing whether a Man's Head be full of Vapours, or of Proclamation; Wind in the Brain makes Men giddy as well as Wine, and Men reel and ſtagger to and fro as unſeemly by the impulſe of uncertain rumours, as thoſe that are intoxicated with the ſtrongeſt Liquors. Beſides, juſt as he that knows not how to entertain himſelf at home, uſually applies himſelf to the Tavern or the Ale-houſe for his relief; ſo it is the cuſtom of idle People, and ſuch as are negligent of their own Affairs, to buſie themſelves in matters that do not belong to them: And there is yet another thing worſe than all this, namely, whereas the Tavern-Drunkard ſleeps and evaporates his Wine, and comes to himſelf again, the Coffee-houſe Drunkard ſcarcely ever clearly diſpels thoſe Vapours of News that have filled his Crown.

Bioph. That is ſmartly ſpoken: But however a Man

a Man ſhall look like a Male-content with the times, or at leaſt will ſeem to be unconcerned for his Country, that wholly diſregards News.

Sabaſt. With reverence to publick Opinion, I ſhould think the quite contrary in both Particulars. For in the firſt place it is notorious that the Male-content is always liſtening after novelty, and I cannot tell whether his Head be fuller of little Stories, or of Maggots; whereas the Man in good humour and contented, minds only his own buſineſs, and lets it alone to God and the King to govern the World.

And then for the other Particular, it is the eaſieſt thing in the World to obſerve that your right News-monger cares not a ruſh which end goes forward, or whether the ſtate of things be good or bad for his Country, ſo there be News for his own entertainment.

But after all, now I think better of it, I have a very remarkable Story to tell you: But you are ſo great a Critick you will believe nothing, and therefore I had as good hold my peace.

Bioph. Nay, good *Sebaſtian*, let us have it: You are a Perſon of good Intelligence, if you will pleaſe to communicate.

Sebaſt. It is ſo very ſtrange and wonderful News, that I ſuſpect your Faith; but yet it is ſuch as puts me almoſt into an Ecſtacy every time I think upon it. Sebaſtian's *ſtrange News of a New-found-land.*

Bioph. Do not Tantalize us with expectation, whilſt you raiſe the value of your Story, nor tempt our phancies to anticipate and deflower it.

Sebaſt. Why then it is the diſcovery and deſcription of a certain Country, which is (by relation)

lation) the very Garden and Paradiſe of the whole World, ſo tranſcendently admirable, that *Italy*, *Theſſaly*, or whatſoever you have ſeen or heard of in all your life, is nothing to it.

Bioph. Puh! Who would have expected Foreign News after ſuch a Preface? and all but ſome Iſland of Pines, I warrant you! Or ſuppoſe it ſhould be true, what can it be to us? however go on, *Sebaſtian*, perhaps it may afford us ſome diverſion.

Sebaſt. I preſaged what entertainment my News would have with you: What can it be to us, ſay you? Why, when you underſtand all, you will bleſs your ſelf that there is ſuch a place in the World, which you may go to if you pleaſe, where you may find retreat from all troubles at home, and be happy beyond imagination; nay, let me tell you, you muſt, you will go to it if you love your ſelf.

Bioph. You ſpeak at a ſtrange rate, *Sebaſtian*, a Man would thing you were either ſtrangely impoſed upon your ſelf, or elſe that you had very mean apprehenſions of our diſcretion: But let it ſuffice to ſay, That, ſoberly ſpeaking, there is no Country upon the face of the Earth can deſerve this *Encomium*; beſides, when all is ſaid that can be ſaid, every Man's own home is his beſt Country.

Sebaſt. Why, do you not underſtand me? This which I am ſpeaking of, is or will be your home too, at leaſt if you will but take the pains to travel thither.

Bioph. I marry, thank you for that; but I wiſt it is better to believe than to go look in this Caſe. What! change my Native Country, tranſplant my ſelf at theſe years! No, I am

am too old, and have taken too deep root where I am, for that.

Phil. Aſſure your ſelf, *Biophilus*, there is ſomething extraordinary that *Sebaſtian* expreſſes himſelf thus; He is no Hypochondriack nor whimſical Enthuſiaſt, but a Man of the dryeſt and beſt tempered underſtanding.

Bioph. I have always thought no leſs, which raiſes my wonder now: Come, 'pray you, *Sebaſtian*, tell us plainly what you have to ſay upon good Grounds concerning this place which you are in ſuch a rapture about.

Sebaſt. In earneſt, Sir, I have to ſay all that is poſſible to be ſaid, and much more than I can expreſs.

Bioph. So it ſeems; for I perceive you are ſo full of it, you cannot vent your ſelf; we muſt therefore broach you by degrees. In the firſt place let me ask you, what is the Name of this ſtrange Country.

Sebaſt. It is called *Urania.*

Bioph. A Romantick Name! But, I pray you, in what Longitude and Latitude is it ſituate, that a Man may know where to find it, if he ſhould have a mind to go thither? *An Allegorical Deſcription of the new Country.*

Sebaſt. I am not skilful in that kind of Learning, neither do I remember that it was told Men in thoſe terms how the Country lies, but perhaps this may tend to your ſatisfaction; I am aſſured that they have no night or darkneſs there, for the Sun never goes off their Horizon, nor are there any long Evenings and tedious Nights which we complain of in *England*; by this Character I ſuppoſe you may gueſs at the Latitude of the place.

Bioph.

Bioph. Well, I will consider of that at leisure, in the mean time tell us what is said to be the temper of the Air?

Sebast. O Sir, the Air is sweet and temperate beyond compare; it is *Æther* rather than Air, there is neither violent heat nor cold, no distinction of Summer and Winter, and indeed no such things, but a perpetual Spring; so that Flowers blossom, and Fruit ripen all the Year long; and by reason of this serenity and constancy of the Air, the Country is so healthful, that there is never any epidemical or reigning Disease, no man feeble and languishing; nay, not so much as wrinkles or grey hairs upon any mans head or face, insomuch, that you would think the inhabitants were all absolutely immortal.

Bioph. If that one thing alone be true, I warrant you the Country wants no people.

Sebast. O very populous, yet by reason of its prodigious fruitfulness it can never be overstockt; for, they say, it yields a fresh Harvest of all kind of Fruits every Month, and that a most abundant one; forasmuch as no Weeds, nor Thorns and Bryars grow there, but only that which is good for the use of Man, and, which is most of all wonderful, all this is brought forth spontaneously, without the toil and labour of Man.

They say also there are no kind of wild Beasts there, either to affright and annoy the people, or to devour the Fruits of the Land; nay, not so much as any Serpents, or other venomous Creatures or troublesome Insects; and all this is owing to the clemency of the Air, the peculiar nature of the Soil, together with God's Blessing upon both.

Bioph.

Bioph. I perceive a man may eat well; and when he hath ſo done may ſleep in a whole Skin there, that I like; and I would to God it were not a Romance which you give us: But go on, *Sebaſtian*, what is the Polity and Government of the Country?

Sebaſt. The Government is perfectly Monarchical, and the Prince is abſolute; yet I do not hear that any of his Subjects wear wooden Shooes or feed upon Cabbage, but all of them enjoy their liberty and property as ſecurely and fully as in any Common-wealth in the World.

There is no ſquabbling about Privileges, no interfering between Prerogative and Immunities, Dominion and Common Right; the King commands what he will, and the people willingly obey him: for his Wiſdom and Goodneſs moderate his Will and Power better than all the Boundaries of written Laws.

And this I am informed of too, that though there be ſeveral Degrees of Subjects, as there are amongſt us, becauſe otherwiſe there could be no ſufficient encouragement to induſtry, nor no capacity in the Prince to ſet marks of favour upon thoſe that deſerve extraordinarily of him; yet from hence ariſe no emulations amongſt the Nobility, nor any oppreſſion of the Commons; the people do not envy and murmur againſt the Great Ones, nor on the other ſide do they as greater Fiſh devour the leſſer.

Bioph. A rare temper of Government this! and not leſs admirable than that of the Air you ſpake of before: You amuze me ſtrangely. But what are the ſtaple Commodities of the Country?

Sebaſt.

Sebaſt. As for that you muſt know it is not with *Urania* as with moſt other Countries, where uſually one Province abounds with what another wants, and the other needs what that can ſpare; and ſo there is a neceſſity of reciprocal Intercourſe between them, both to relieve their neceſſities mutually, and to diſcharge their ſuperfluities; and herein you know lies both the reaſon of Trade, and the ſecurity of Alliances between ſeveral Countries in our Parts of the World. But now *Urania* being (as was wont to be ſaid of *Egypt*) a Country ſelf-ſufficient, depends not at all upon Foreign Commerce; and therefore as it needs nothing from abroad, ſo conſequently it ſends out few or none of thoſe Commodities it abounds with; but rather (as I ſhall tell you by and by) invites Foreigners to come over to them, and reſide amongſt them, and ſo to partake freely of the Advantages of that happy Land.

Yet I muſt tell you, they have very great Rarities in thoſe Parts, and ſuch as are exceedingly deſired by all other People that underſtand the worth of them; as in particular to ſpecifie ſome few which are not at all to be found any where elſe.

In the firſt place they have the true *Elixir Vitæ*, a very precious Balm, far beyond that of *Gilead*, that perfectly cures all Diſeaſes, both inward and outward, I had almoſt ſaid of body and mind. This Operates without any pain to the Patient, and in outward applications, heals all kind of Wounds, and leaves no ſcar or mark behind it.

They have alſo an admirable Water, which ſo quickens all the Senſes, and peculiarly the Sight,

ſight, that a Man by the help of it ſhall ſee further than by a Teleſcope, and pierce into the very Secrets of Nature.

The common Food of the Country is ſomewhat anſwerable to the deſcription of *Manna*, and hath that peculiar taſte which every Man affects, and ſatisfies all the powers of Nature. They have alſo a delicious Wine called *Lachryma Chriſti*, which amongſt other Vertues makes Men forget all ſorrows whatſoever: And this they uſually drink in an Amethyſt Cup, which preſerves them from Surfeits or Intemperance, what proportions ſoever they drink.

Amongſt the reſt, they have a ſort of *Nitre*, ſo very powerful and abſterſive, that it takes away all ſpots, blemiſhes and aſperſions, and makes thoſe that uſe it ſo very beautiful, that they raviſh the Eyes of Beholders.

It were endleſs to go about to enumerate the Commodities of this Country, which clearly outgoes the Holy Land, though it was ſaid that in *Solomon*'s days Gold and Silver were there as common as the Stones of the Street: And for proof of it, the Inhabitants are generally ſo rich and proſperous, that there is not one poor Man in the whole Land, not one to be found, that doth need or will ask an Alms. The hungry and naked, thoſe grievous Spectacles (too ſadly common in moſt other places) are not to be ſeen there; of which, amongſt other cauſes, theſe are aſſigned, *viz.* there is no ſordid and cruel *Miſer* there, who hoards up what others ſhould live upon; nor is there any waſtful Glutton or Epicure, who devours his own and other Folks Portion too. In ſhort, they ſay, all deſirable things are there in ſuch abundance,

that every man is as rich, as full, and as happy as he pleases.

Bioph. If all this was possible to be true, which I must beg your pardon to declare I have not faith enough to believe, yet the felicity of this Country could not be long-liv'd; for it will certainly derive upon its self the envy of all its Neighbours: and the effect of that will be, that those who have the best Iron will quickly become Masters of all this Wealth.

Sebast. Nay, *Biophilus*, as for that there is no danger; for the Country is altogether inaccessible, save only by one narrow way, and that is so well guarded and defended, that to this day no Enemy hath ever had the confidence to assail it. And Besides all, the Inhabitants are in such perfect Peace and Amity one with another, and maintain so inviolably their Allegiance towards their Sovereign, that as no Foreigner hath any encouragement to enterprize upon them by treachery, so neither, can he without mighty folly think himself considerable enough to prevail by force against such an united strength.

Bioph. Now you speak of that, I pray give me leave to ask you one Question more, What is the humour of the People, both amongst themselves, and towards Strangers?

Sebast. That is as admirable in its kind as any thing I have told you yet. The Complexion of the People is said to be universally sanguine, and consequently they are sprightly and cheerful, ingenious and complaisant, open-hearted and yet grave, without fraud and without jealousie; they neither intend any hurt, nor do they suspect any. Amongst other Instances

ſtances of their ſedate cheerfulneſs, they are exceedingly addicted to Muſick, and their Songs are obſerved to be compoſed for the moſt part in praiſe of their Prince, the ſplendour of his Court, the Glory of his Atchievements, and the Felicity of his Reign.

So far are they from wrath and choler, that in the memory of Man there hath not been one Law Suit commenced amongſt them; and, which is more, not one Theological Diſputation, which uſually are attended with ſo much heat and animoſity in theſe Parts of the World. But as for Tale-bearers, Whiſperers, Back-biters, and all that melancholy and envious Brood, there is not one of them to be found in all the Country; every Man there loves his Neighbour as himſelf, and is as tender of his intereſt and reputation as of his own.

And then for their temper and carriage towards Strangers, they are infinitely civil and obliging: They deride not other Mens habit, or mein, or language, or cuſtoms, or complexions; but contrariwiſe, whenſoever any ſuch come amongſt them, they welcome them heartily, treat them with all inſtances of Hoſpitality, and by all poſſible obligations and indearments, invite them to become one People with themſelves, and as much as in them lies are ready to contribute their aſſiſtance towards their Voyage.

Ioſeph. This is a very ſtrange Relation as ever I heard in my life: But in plain Engliſh it is too good to be true. All this can amount to no more than to ſome *Utopia* or new *Atlantis*. Pardon my freedom, good *Sebaſtian*; I acknowledge you a wiſe and a learned Gentle-

man, that Character all the World allows you, but in this particular Story ſome Body hath unworthily abuſed your good Nature; for it can be no better than a Fiction, a Legend, a mere Flam.

Sebaſt. You do not ordinarily think a Man bound to warrant the News he tells you, but you us'd to be contented to take it as he hath it; and I am ſure you will not allow me to preſcribe to you what you ſhall believe: However, I aſſure you upon the word of a Gentleman and a Chriſtian, I have not deviſed it of my own Head, but am as well ſatisfied of the truth and reality of the Relation I have made to you, as it is poſſible for me to be of any thing which I have not ſeen with my Eyes; and I am very confident I have as good grounds for my perſwaſion, as it is fit for a diſcreet Man to require in ſuch a Caſe.

Sebaſtian relates the grounds of the credibility of his Story.

Bioph. I wiſh you could ſatisfie me as well; I pray therefore do us the favour to let us know what probabilities you go upon in this matter?

Sebaſt. They ſay we Engliſhmen (above all People) love to be cheated, and encourage impoſtors by our credulity: But if that be the humour of our Country-men, I muſt beg their pardon if I a little vary from them in that Particular. I confeſs I am not ſo ill-natur'd as to ſuſpect that every Body I converſe with hath deſigns upon me; nor yet am I ſo ſupinely ſoft and credulous, as to be at every Bodies mercy; or ſo greedy of News, as to ſwallow all that comes, without chewing. And as to the buſineſs before us, I poſitively affirm to you, I had this

this ſtrange Relation (as you eſteem it) from one that came from the place, and was an Eye-witneſs of what he reported, and therefore could not be deceived himſelf in what he related: And then his Quality was ſuch, as that he could have no intereſt to impoſe upon me therein; for he was no leſs a man than the only Son of the Great Monarch of the Country, and he came as Ambaſſador Extraordinary from the King his Father, on purpoſe to invite and incline our people to participate of that happy Region, and of all the admirable advantages aforeſaid; and aſſured us, That all which came ſhould be free Denizons of *Urania*.

Bioph. I, Good *Sebaſtian*, he told you ſo; but how are you ſure he was not an Impoſtor; and deſigned to put tricks upon you and our good-natured Country-men?

Sebaſt. As for that, his very Perſon and Mien ſpake for him, both which were ſo Auguſt and Grand, as that no mean Man could bear out the Port he uſed: Beſides this, he came not in a clancular way, but made his Publick Entry, and his Train and Equipage was Grave and Majeſtick, like himſelf, far beyond the empty pomp and pageantry of a Counterfeit. His Commiſſion and Letters Credential alſo were publickly ſeen, read and allowed; and they were ſealed with ſuch a Seal, as no wit of Man could imitate or counterfeit.

Add unto all this, I have ſeen the Map or Chart of the Country, I have peruſed the Digeſt of the Laws of the Kingdom, theſe Eyes have read the Records of their Hiſtory, and with this mouth I have taſted the delicious fruits

of the Land. What would you have more to justifie the matter of fact?

Biophil. What would I have more? Why, I think you venture too great a Stock in one Bottom; I would not trust to any one Man, whatsoever he were, in a relation of this nature; I should require to see and speak with many about it before I would believe it.

Sebast. You say well: But can you think it reasonable to require that so great a Prince should send many Ambassadors on such an Errand, when he aims not at his own Greatness, or the accommodating of his own Affairs, nor hath any need of our alliance and assistance; but merely designs our benefit? Or can you expect that he should send every day fresh Envoys, and that not only to whole Countries, but to every individual person too? And if you could imagine such a Prince should condescend to this also, can you think it would be easie to find many fit persons for such a purpose, who would be willing to forsake the Glories of such a Court, or the contentments of home in such a Region, and to expose themselves to the difficulties and hazards of Travel, as well as to the change of Air and Diet, and a thousand other inconveniencies attendant upon such an Expedition? No, *Biophilus*, it was an instance of wonderful Goodness, that such a Prince should send one Ambassador on such an Errand, and admirable Charity and self-denial in him that undertook and performed it.

Bioph. You speak reason, I must acknowledge, in that particular; but yet I can never believe, that if there were any such Country as your intelligence amounts to, it should lie undiscovered to

to theſe Parts of the World until now. What! *Drake*, *Candiſh*, *Columbus*, *Davis*, ——— none of them in all their Travels take notice of ſuch a Place, nor give the leaſt intimation of it until now.

Sebaſt. That is no ſuch ſtrange thing as you make it; if you call to mind how long a time it was before the World would believe there were *Antipodes*, and yet it is plain that ſo long one full half of the World was unknown to the other. Or, if you remember, that time was, (and that not an ignorant Age neither) when the Roman Empire was thought to embrace the whole Earth, which as now we are certain took not in one fifth (perhaps not one tenth) of it. Do you not know, that *Hercules*'s Pillars were accounted the Boundaries of humane Travels, and that for a great many Ages both the torrid and frigid Zones (as they are called) were eſteemed uninhabitable, and all that time the World was ignorant of it ſelf? Beſides, you know it is not very long ſince thoſe vaſt Tracts of Land, the *Weſt Indies*, were firſt diſcovered by ſome of the Perſons you have named; and, to ſay no more, I pray how many Ages paſt over the heads of Mankind before this our Native Country of *Britain* (as conſiderable as it is, and we juſtly eſteem it) came into any knowledge or conſideration with the reſt of the World: think it not ſtrange therefore if *Urania* was ſo lately diſcovered.

Bioph. But that which I principally intended to ſay was this, You afford me matter of great wonder, that you ſhould be ſo much concerned for a place very newly diſcovered (if it be diſcovered) but eſpecially that you ſhould be-

lieve so many strange things of it, before any one person hath gone from hence, and returned hither again to confirm those reports of it.

Sebast. Ifs and Exceptions are endless, and I know no way to make a Man believe that hath no mind to it; yet I will give you all the satisfaction I am able, and that which I think is sufficient in such a Case. You must know therefore that this Country hath not been wholly undiscovered till now, as you suppose; for I my self have seen a Book of great Authority and Antiquity, which though somewhat obscurely and figuratively written, yet certainly pointed at such a place, and in some measure described it too, to him that attentively read and considered it. And besides, there are some very credible relations concerning some certain persons that have heretofore made very fortunate Voyages thither.

But as to that you object, that no Man hath gone from hence thither, and returned again to us to bring us the Tydings; you will easily satisfie your self therein, if you consider what I intimated before, *viz.* That those who once get thither can have no inclinations to make a Change so much to their disadvantage, as it much needs be for them to return hither again. Besides, though they say the passage is not very long thither, yet it is no common Road; and therefore very few will (at least unnecessarily) undertake it.

Preparations for the Journey to Urania.

Phil. But if it be an untraced Path, how shall a Man find the way thither, if he have a mind to go?

Sebast. O *Philander*, there is no great difficulty

culty in that, if a Man be well reſolved on the buſineſs; for beſides a Chart, and very punctual inſtructions which the Ambaſſador left behind him for that purpoſe when he was amongſt us, there are great ſtore of very skilful and faithful Guides and Pilots, who freely offer their ſervice, and will not fail with God's Bleſſing to land us ſafe there.

Phil. I cannot tell what *Biophilus* thinks of this buſineſs: But for my part, *Sebaſtian*, I am ſo raviſhed with your relation, that if there be ſuch a place in the World I will find it out by God's help. I thank God I am no Male-Content, either with my Native Country, or my private Fortunes; yet I ſee no reaſon we ſhould like Muſhromes live and die upon the ſame ſpot, and be a mere *acceſſio Soli*, or Heirlomes to the place where we happened to be born, eſpecially if we may thus much mend our ſelves by the change. I am a Citizen of the World, and that ſhall be my Country where I can fare beſt.

But will you go with me, *Sebaſtian?* Then I ſhall not only be out of all doubt of the truth of your Narrative, when I ſee you ſo far believe it your ſelf, as to adventure all upon it; but I ſhall with much more cheerfulneſs change my Country, when I do not change my Friend, nor forego your Company.

Sebaſt. Obligingly ſpoken, and bravely reſolved, *Philander*: By God's Grace I will go with you; and to aſſure you of my intentions, I will now acquaint you that I have been this good while in ſetting things in order, and in making preparations for the Voyage.

Phil. But how ſhall we diſpoſe of our Eſtates here?

here? And what Commodities had we beſt to furniſh our ſelves with, to carry over with us?

Sebaſt. As for the diſpoſal of our preſent fortunes, I can tell you there are very ſure Returns betwixt this Country and that; for the Prince himſelf will be your ſecurity, if you put your Effects into ſuch hands as he hath appointed. But as for Merchandiſe to carry with us, there will be no need of that; for the Country which we have in our eye is ſo glorioufly rich and plentiful, the Prince is ſo noble and benign, and all the Inhabitants ſo kind and charitable, that we ſhall be ſure as ſoon as ever we come there to be furniſhed *gratis* with all that our hearts can wiſh: and moreover, if we ſhould put our ſelves to the trouble of tranſporting our Baggage with us, it would not only incumber us in our Journey, but would alſo ſeem to be ſuch mere traſh and lumber when we come there, that we ſhould be aſhamed of it and of our ſelves too, for ſetting ſuch a value upon it.

But there is another thing, and much more material, which I muſt needs tell you of, in order to our more favourable reception when we come there, that is, we muſt before-hand quite alter our habit and Garb, and not ſo much as ſmell of the Earth we came from: amongſt other things, we muſt diſuſe our ſelves from Onions and Garlick, and from Fleſh too, that we may the eaſier accord with the Diet of the Country; and we muſt refine our Spirits, that we may be fit to breath in that pure Air; and having ſo done, there needs no more but to carry with us great minds and large Souls, to qualifie us both for the Society and the enjoyments there.

Phil,

Phil. Thank you, Dear Friend and Fellow-Traveller (for ſo I will henceforward ſtile you) for theſe inſtructions: I will uſe the beſt of my endeavours to be fitted accordingly: But is there any thing elſe that I need to be adviſed in?

Sebaſt. O yes, there is one thing more which I doubt you do not think of, and I am ſomewhat afraid leſt the mention of it ſhould diſcourage you; but it muſt be, and there is no avoiding it.

Phil. In the name of God, what is it? Miſtruſt not my courage or conſtancy; I'll ſtick at nothing that croſſes my way to *Urania*.

Sebaſt. You remember I have intimated to you already, that when we come at the Country we deſign, we ſhall be immortal, we can never die afterwards; but we muſt die beforehand, or we ſhall never come thither. This is the pinch of the buſineſs, what think you of it now, *Philander?*

Phil. Never the worſe for that, fellow-Traveller: But, Good Lord! what a Dream have I been in all this while? I thought verily you had ſpoken Hiſtorical truth of ſome rare Earthly Country: but now my eyes are open, and I perceive you mean Heaven, that's the *Urania* you have all this while amuzed us with: Now I can unriddle the whole buſineſs; I have now a Clue to guide me through the maze of your Diſcourſe, and can decypher all the Figures you have uſed. I am ſure 'tis Heaven only can anſwer the Character you have given; that is the place where there is no pain, ſickneſs, nor death; there is no Night nor darkneſs, but a perpetual Day; there is to be found the true Balſom that cures all the Diſtempers and

Wounds

Wounds both of Body and Mind; there are to be had all the other Rarities which you have mentioned; *Jesus Christ* is the Ambassador from God Almighty, that invites us thither; all is plain and easie now; how dull was I, that I could not understand you sooner!

Biophi. And have you drolled with us all this while, *Sebastian?* Have you weedled me back again into the Subject I declined? Is your famous *Urania* in another World? I thought your News was impossible to be true, and now you as good as confess it.

Sebast. By your pardon, *Biophilus*, have I done you any wrong? You ask'd for News, and I have told you good and true News; News of more importance, and more comfortable than any the Coffee-House affords; not ill-natured Stories of Whig and Tory, nor surmises about *France* and *Italy*, Turk and Count *Teckley*; but a great Truth of a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, a Kingdom wherein there is Righteousness and Justice, Unity and Joy, Love and Good-will, everlasting Peace, and everlasting Life; a state of that felicity, that it is able to make us weary of this World, and to render the time of our life tedious to us till we come to the enjoyment of it; in a word, that is sufficient to make all the ways of Vertue seem easie and delectable, and even Death it self desirable in the way thither.

What think you of it, *Philander*, now you understand what Country it is I perswaded you to? Doth your mind hold for the Voyage? Will you go on with your Preparations for it, as we were discoursing before? Will you venture to shoot the Gulph that you may arrive at it?

Phil.

Phil. Yes, Fellow-Traveller, I hold my reſolution. For though I find I was miſtaken in the particular, yet not in the general; it was an Earthly Paradiſe that I had in my thoughts all the while you were diſcourſing figuratively to us, and I had no other apprehenſions of your deſign, and therein *Biophilus* was more in the right than I, who was confident there could be no ſuch Country in this World as you deſcribed: But I heartily thank you for the deception; you have cheated us into our own advantage. And now that I underſtand you, I do not change my Courſe, though I change my Port; I hope I ſhall not be ſo abſurd, as to be more in earneſt for an Earthly Country than for an Heavenly.

Philander *tranſported with the Contemplation of Heaven.*

Who would not gladly be at everlaſting reſt, and in an unchangeable Condition? We are *but Pilgrims and Strangers in this World*, but there we ſhall be at Home and in our Father's Houſe; here we are continually toſſed with Winds and Seas, tormented betwixt Hopes and Fears; there we come into Harbour, and ſhall be ſafe as upon a Rock, ſtable and ſetled as the Mountains.

Who can chuſe but wiſh to live for ever, and would not be contented to die once, that he might be out of the reach of Chance or danger for ever after? Everlaſting Life! what an Ocean of joy and felicity is contained in it! It puts me into an Ecſtaſie to think of it! Surely he doth not love himſelf, or doth not underſtand himſelf, who would not gladly leave an uncertain, troubleſome, quarrelſome, fooliſh, diſputing, ſuſpicious, envious World, upon far

far easier terms than the attainment of it. But to live with the Ever-blessed Jesus, to spend Eternity in the Society of good and wise, kind and peaceable Men, to enter into everlasting Friendships, inviolable Peace, unchangable Felicity! I am ravished and transported with the thoughts of it.

When once I had the happiness to take notice of a poor Man, blind from his Mother's Womb, who never had seen the Sun, nor could have any Notion of Beauty or Colours, nor of any of that variety of delightful Objects which the eye and light present to us, and entertain us with; when afterwards (I say) by a strange Cure this poor Man had his Eyes opened, and found a Crowd of new Delights press in upon him, he thought himself surrounded with Miracles, and was almost distracted with Wonder. And certainly no less, but a great deal more, will our surprize be when we come to Heaven, where probably we shall have new Powers opened, which shall discover such Glories to us as we were not capable of perceiving before, if they had been presented to us; but most certainly we shall then have new Objects of delight to entertain those Powers we have, and those transcendent to all we ever had experience of before.

Or when I think of the Children of *Israel* first coming out of *Egypt*, where they had lived for some hundreds of Years in the Condition of Slaves, under the jealous Eye of a barbarous Prince, treated with hardship and severity, and exposed to all the indignities, insolences and cruelty of a faithless and ingrateful People; and then after this, (leaping, as we say, out of the

the Frying Pan into the Fire) were carried into a vaſt and howling Wilderneſs, and there ſpending forty Years more 'amidſt Seas and Mountains, in danger of Wild Beaſts, and beſet with Enemies, having no City of refuge, no ſtrong Holds, no Friends, no Allies, no Comfort or Supplies, but from hand to mouth; when (I ſay) theſe poor People arrived at laſt at the Promiſed Land, the Land of *Canaan*, a Land of Olive-yards and Vine-yards, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, and the Glory of all Lands, and found themſelves peaceably poſſeſs'd of it, under their own God, their own Prince, and their own Laws, and flowing in ſuch plenty of all good things, that they now became the admiration and envy of all their Neighbours, who had been the Subject of their contempt and ſcorn before; I can but phanſie how they were aſtoniſhed at the change, what a wonder they were to themſelves; and I am apt to believe that for ſometime after they could not but ſuſpect they were under a pleaſant illuſion of phancy, and that all their felicity was no better than a Dream.

So aſſuredly, when we ſhall firſt come to Heaven, our ſpiritual *Canaan*, to the enjoyment of an happineſs of God's preparing, who hath all the ingredients of felicity in his power, and infinite Wiſdom to contrive and compound them, and unſpeakable goodneſs to beſtow them, and who, as the Scripture expreſſes it, hath from the beginning of the World been deſigning and preparing ſuch a ſyſtem of joy and felicity as may at once both moſt delight his Creatures, and diſplay all his aforeſaid Attributes; when I ſay, we ſhall firſt obſerve the ſtrange change between

between a narrow, ſtingy, neceſſitous, unquiet, ſickly, peeviſh, and contentious World, which we have left behind us, and the ſetlement and peace, plenty and glory of that we enter upon; it will not be eaſie for us (without larger minds than we have now) to know how to behave our ſelves; we ſhall be apt to be oppreſt with wonder, and, if it were poſſible, to die with exceſs of joy.

Sebaſt. You ſpeak bravely and ſenſibly, Dear *Phil.* You ſeem to have gone up to Mount *Nebo*, and to have fed your Eyes with the proſpect of the Holy Land; but have you conſidered the difficulties of the way, as well as the happineſs of the journies end? Will you not like the Iſraelites (you ſpake of even now) repent, and bethink your ſelf of turning back when you encounter difficulty or danger? Will not Death affright you when it appears in all its diſmal pomp? Will you not ſhrink when you ſhall come to be ſtripped naked of all your Worldly Habiliments? Will you not have a lingring after your old Accommodations, your fine Houſe, rich Furnitures, pleaſant Gardens, ſprightly Wines, or any other Pleaſures and Entertainments of the Body?

Phil. No, no, *Sebaſtian*, I will go to Heaven, whatever come of it; what can diſcourage a Man when Heaven is at Stake? If the Journey put me to a little Trouble, there is Reſt at the end of it. What is it to exerciſe a little patience, when a Man ſhall be crowned at laſt? Who would not run, ſtrive, do, or ſuffer any thing, and venture all upon ſuch a wager?

Shall I be frighted with Death? that will come

come however, and I am ſure the neglecting eternal life is not the way to eſcape it. *Chriſtian Reſolution.*

Shall I be ſollicitous for my eſtate and worldly accommodations, when I know, whether I go to Heaven or no, I muſt ſhortly leave them all behind me? And ſurely if they cannot ſave me from Death, they ought not to hinder me of eternal Life.

Or ſhall I hanker after Onions and Garlick, and the Fleſh-Pots of *Egypt*, as you called the pleaſures of the Body, which will certainly forſake me, if I do not forſake them firſt? No, I have counted the coſt, there is nothing ſhall diſcourage me by the Grace of God, I will go to Heaven; but I pray let us not part Company, let us go to Heaven together.

Sebaſt. With all my Heart, dear Friend; for though I doubt we muſt not expect much Company with us, yet perfect ſolitude is ſomewhat uncomfortable, and there are great advantages of Society. For *The advantages of good Company in the way to Heaven.* if any body ſhould be ſo abſurd as to laugh at us on our Journey, we can the better deſpiſe them. If either of us ſhould happen to be heavy and weary in our way, we may animate and quicken one another. If any difficulty befal, that may be too hard for any one of us, by our united ſtrength we may be able to encounter and remove it. If either of us ſhould ſwerve a little out of the narrow way, towards the right hand or towards the left, the other may recal and rectifie him. Beſides, the great additional comfort it will be when we come at our Journies end, not only that we ſee one another happy,

and enjoy one anothers Society, but especially when we reflect upon the good service we have done to one another in bringing each other thither, we shall have our joys redoubled by the reflection, and feel not only our own individual shares, but that also of each other.

Phil. Happily thought of, Fellow-Traveller, but will not *Biophilus* go with us too? what say you, Sir?

Scepticism displaying its humour, and checks by sober reason.

Bioph. You are honest Gentlemen, and my good Friends; but, Lord, what Romances do you make, what Castles you do build in the Air, and what shadows do you feed your selves withal! You talk of Heaven as confidently as if you had travelled an hundred times through all the Regions of it, or rather indeed as if you had visited the World in the Moon. But when all is done, did ever you or any Body else see such a place as Heaven. For God's sake therefore leave these Enthusiastical Whimsies, and talk like Men, speak of something that is certain and visible, or probable at least, and do not forego substance for shadows, certainties for uncertainties.

Phil. God help you, good Neighbour, in requital of the caution you give us: assure your self, we have the same senses and the same self-love that you have, and only wish you had the same Faith that we have. We are not willing to part with certainties for uncertainties; for if Heaven be not certain, we are sure nothing else is. And as for the things of this World, they are so far from it, that nothing is more certain, than that we must part with them shortly, whether we will or no: But as for the other

other World, *we know whom* we have believed.

Bioph. I tell you, all is but dream and phancy, there is no proof in the World for it. All you have to ſay is, that Men muſt believe; as if you ſhould ſay, ſhut your Eyes and ſee; you perſwade a man to find the way to Heaven blindfold. No, give me good proof, or I'll not ſtir a foot; with me ſeeing is believing.

Phil. Remember your ſelf, good Neighbour, are not you a Chriſtian? Do not you believe that Jeſus Chriſt came from Heaven on purpoſe to make diſcovery to us of thoſe Celeſtial Regions, and to ſhew us the way thither? And did not he confirm his report to us by undeniable Miracles? Did he not come into the World miraculouſly, and return thither again viſibly? Did he not from thence ſend down admirable tokens of his Preſence and Authority there, eſpecially on the famous Day of Pentecoſt? Beſides, do you not ſee all wiſe Men provide for another World, and that generally good and vertuous Men, when they come to die, are raviſhed with joy in contemplation of it, as if they really ſaw Heaven open to receive them?

Bioph. Whether or no I believe as much as you do, yet I believe this one thing inſtead of all the reſt, that we are born to be cheated. For what with the illuſions of our own melancholy phancies, what by the prejudices of our Education, and the imperious dictates of others, what by the Authority of unaccountable Tradition, and publick Fame, and what by the deſigns of Politicians, it is an hard matter to know what elſe to believe.

Phil. Indeed, *Biophilus*, I am both ſorry and aſhamed to hear you talk at this rate. And I

do not wonder now, that you were ſo deſirous to decline this kind of Diſcourſe when we fell upon it. I hope you take me for your Friend as well as your Neighbour, and *Sebaſtian* here for a diſcreet and worthy Gentleman, ſuffer your ſelf to be perſwaded by us to think and ſpeak more ſoberly and becoming your ſelf in theſe great matters, or if you will not think like a Chriſtian, yet talk like a Man; for let me tell you, you ſeem not only to reject Chriſtianity, but all Religion in general, and upon thoſe terms you will be as little fit for this World as for that which is to come.

For what a ſad Creature is a Man of no Religion at all? What State or Civil Government will be able to endure him, whom no Oaths can oblige or faſten upon? How can there be any Civil Society with him that hath no Faith, that can neither truſt nor be truſted? What ſecurity can ſuch a Man give, that he ſhall not diſturb the State, violate the perſon of his Prince, falſify his truſt, betray his Friend, cut his Neighbours throat, if he be under the awe of no God, the expectation of no rewards nor puniſhments in another World? What ſecurity can there be, I ſay, in dealing with ſuch a Man, what ſincerity in his Friendſhip, what ſafety in his Neighbourhood? For all theſe depend upon the reverence of Religion, which he that is wholly deſtitute of, muſt needs become *devotum caput*, a Wolfs Head, the peſt and vermine of humane Society.

Do not therefore, dear *Biophilus*, at once both ſtifle your own Conſcience, and affront the common ſenſe and reaſon of Mankind. Do not under the pretence of being more witty and ſagacious than other men, reaſon your ſelf into

into brutality, and whilſt you grow over-wiſe in your own Eyes, be the moſt fatally miſtaken and loſt for ever?

Why ſhould you abandon your ſelf to deſperation, and leave your ſelf without any refuge in adverſity: we are well and cheerful here at preſent, God be thanked; but the time will come when God will ſtand us in ſtead, when we ſhall have need of the retreats and comforts of Religion. Above all things in the World, leave not your ſelf without hope in your latter end, do as becometh a Man of your parts and diſcretion, ſuſpect your own ſuſpicions, and let not the opinion you have, that other Men are under prejudices, prejudice you againſt the Arguments for believing. Come deal ingenuouſly, and open your Breaſt, propound the grounds of your ſuſpicions, the objections you have againſt Religion; and though I cannot promiſe you that I will anſwer them all to your ſatisfaction, yet I doubt not but here is one that will.

Bioph. Look you, Gentlemen, you put me into a great ſtrait; for if upon this invitation of yours, I do not diſcloſe my mind to you, I ſhall ſeem diſingenuous, and you will think worſe of me than perhaps I deſerve; and on the other ſide, if I do diſcover my Sentiments, it is probable, that my Creed will fall ſo many Articles ſhort of yours, that we ſhall break out into ſome heats, and endanger the continuance of our Neighbourly Converſation. However ſince it ſeems to be your deſire, I will be plain with you, in confidence, that as you are Gentlemen, you will deal ingenuouſly with me, and if you can do me no good, you will do me

no hurt; my meaning is, that if it should happen you do not convince my reason, I hope you will not defame my person, nor expose me to the insolencies of the Rabble, who believe in gross and by whole sale, and throw Dirt upon all that chew what they swallow.

The Epicurean Creed.

Now in the first place, that you may not think me a perfect Sceptick, I declare to you, that I acknowledge the Being of a God, and that not only because the generality of Mankind, and even *Epicurus* himself owned so much, but because it is not conceivable how the World should be without one; for no wit or reason of Man can evince to me, how any thing should begin to be without some necessary and eternal Existent, to begin the motion, and to bring it into Being; or which is the same thing in effect, there can be no second Cause, if there be no first.

But then beyond this you must pardon me, for to deal sincerely with you, I do not think that this God minds or troubles himself about the World after he hath made it. Much less do I see any sufficient ground for that which *Philander* hath been talking so warmly about, namely, a World to come. And for eternal Life (which Men speak such great things of) I profess I look upon it as a flat impossibility, for as much as I see Men die, but see no foundation for a belief, that there is any Life or Existence out of a Body.

There are some other points of affinity with these that I with-hold my assent from: but because you have challenged me to a rational Debate, therefore to give fair play, and to put the

the buſineſs between us to an Iſſue, I will inſiſt but upon one point, and that ſhall be the ſame which we fell into by chance at our firſt coming together; namely, whether there be ſuch a thing as a publick Tribunal or general Judgment, where Mens Actions ſhall be reviewed and cenſured after this life. Prove me but this one Point ſufficiently and plainly, and I will grant you all the reſt.

Schaft. Now you ſhew your ſelf a Man, and a ſhrewd one too, though not a Chriſtian. For I muſt acknowledge that you have with great judgment pitcht upon the very Cardinal Point of Religion; and which, if it be proved (as I do not doubt but it ſhall be) will inferr all the reſt; but if it miſcarry, all falls with it. The perſwaſion of a Judgment to come is the great awe upon Mens Conſciences, the principal motive of Vertue and Piety, the reſtraint and check upon Vice and Wickedneſs, and indeed the ſinew of Civil Government, and bond of humane Society. This both ſuppoſes the Being of a God (which you grant) and of a Providence alſo (which you deny); for if there were not a God, it is evident there could be no Providence in this World, nor Judgment in another: And this, if it be granted or proved, neceſſarily draws after it rewards and puniſhments in the Life to come; for otherwiſe a Judgment would be but a matter of curioſity, and a trouble to no purpoſe. You have therefore, in making choice of this for the critical or deciſive Point, given great proof of your own ſagacity, and put the matter upon a right iſſue.

The great conſequence and general influence of the belief of a Judgment.

Bioph. Well, prove it then.

Sebaſt. What proof do you require of this? Why ſhould not the Teſtimony of the Holy Scripture ſatisfie you? For in the firſt place, if there be a God (which you have acknowledged) you cannot but think it reaſonable, that if he intend to judge the World, he ſhould give ſome intimation of it to the Sons of Men beforehand, ſince they muſt needs be ſo highly concerned in the knowledge of it; and then in the next place the Scripture cannot be denied to be as expreſs and full in this particular, as it is poſſible for words to make it. There God declares and confirms it innumerable times; and the more to awaken Men to the conſideration of it, and preparation for it, he is ſaid to have appointed a ſet time for it, he hath foretold who ſhall be the Judge, with what pomp and retinue he ſhall come attended, what meaſures he ſhall proceed by, and what ſhall be the circumſtances of that great ſolemnity.

Scripture-proof of a day of Judgment, juſtified by reaſon.

Bioph. Excuſe me there, *Sebaſtian*, I am not to be born down by Authority, but convinced by Reaſon; if you will do any good upon me, you muſt deal with me as a Philoſopher, not a bigotted Perſon.

Sebaſt. By your favour, Sir, it is not to impoſe upon you, to give you Divine Authority for proof. If indeed I ſhould urge you only with the Opinions of Men, you might complain I did you wrong; for in ſuch a caſe your denial would have as much authority as their aſſertion: but I hope God may be believed upon his own word, eſpecially in a buſineſs of this nature, which depends ſo much upon the determination of

of his Will; for who can tell God's Mind better than himself? *Who knows the mind of man, but the spirit of a man which is in him?* And who can pretend to declare what God will do, unless he be pleased to reveal his intentions? But if he declare he will judge the World, we may be sure it shall be done.

Bioph. I, but that is the Question, *Sebastian*, how shall I be assured that God hath any such intentions, or hath made any such Declaration?

Sebast. That which we call by the name of holy Scripture, is nothing else but a Collection of such Declarations of the Mind of the Divine Majesty, as he hath thought fit from time to time to make to the Sons of Men. And those Books, which are so called, have been reverenced by wise Men in all Ages upon that account, as such, all imaginable care hath been taken to preserve them from corruption or depravation, and several of the best of Men have exposed their lives, rather than consent to the destruction of them. Now why should you call in question the Authority of these Books, which you cannot do without impeaching the wisdom of the most able, and the sincerity of the most honest of Men, and upon the same terms you derogate from the Faith of all Mankind, and must (if you will be impartial) abrogate the credit of all the old Records in the World. For as much as (besides all other considerations) these Sacred Records, I mean the Books of the Old and New Testament, do bear an irrefragable Testimony to each other, and as a pair of Indentures, justifie one another. Which you will easily be convinced of, if you consider, that these two Volumes

lumes were written in several very remote Ages, and consequently by persons that could hold no correspondence one with another, and were in the custody of those that were of such contrary Interests and Opinions, that it was impossible they either would or could conspire together to put a Cheat upon the World in them. Now if notwithstanding these two Books (in the circumstances aforesaid) shall verifie one another, so as that whatsoever the Old Testament promises, the New Testament performs; what the one foretold, the other represents the accomplishment of; what ground is or can there be to suspect the truth of them? For if several Witnesses, and those of several Countries, and of contrary Interests, such as never saw the Faces of one another before, and therefore neither would nor could combine together and contrive their Story, and especially being examined apart too, shall notwithstanding jump in the same matter of fact and circumstances also, there is no Man so humorsome and abounding in his own sence, but will allow their evidence to be good and substantial; then much more is there very good ground to believe these Books, which have all these advantages, and several other, which I will not insist upon.

Biaph. These are pretty things which you say; but this is not that kind of proof I expected from you: If this be all the satisfaction you can give me, I am where I was.

Schaft. No, *Biophilus*, this is not all I have to say; but I thought fit to remonstrate to you the sufficiency of this kind of proof in it self, which Men of your way are apt to make so slight of, and thence to convince you, that those Men

that

that take up with this alone, are not ſuch ſoft and credulous people, as you are wont to repreſent them.

But what if I had no other proof but this, I do not find that you are able to reply any thing to it; it is an eaſier thing to cough at an Argument, than to anſwer it. Beſides, if this way of probation were far leſs conſiderable than it is, yet you know that any evidence will ſerve againſt none, and the meaneſt Arguments will carry a Cauſe when there is nothing to be ſaid on the other ſide. If you could but pretend to prove on your part, that there were no ſuch thing as a Judgment to come, you had then ſome reaſon to be ſtrict in your demands of proof from me of what I aſſert: But in a true balance the leaſt grain or moment in the world will caſt the Scale when there is nothing againſt it. Now ſince you know well enough, you can offer no kind of proof of an aſſertion contrary to this we have before us, nothing in the Earth but overwiſe doubts, grave ſuſpicions, and, perhaps it may not be ſo, I appeal to your impartial reaſon, whether it be not more fit to ſuſpect (at leaſt) that it is ſo where there is ſome proof of it, than to ſuſpect it is not ſo where no Argument is given for the Negative; nay, indeed where none can be given.

It is juſt prudence to prepare for a day of Judgment, though the evidence were leſs than it is.

Negatives, you know are hard to prove in general, but eſpecially in ſuch a caſe as this is: For he that undertakes to prove ſuch a Negative, hath but one of theſe two ways to do it, *viz.* either he muſt affirm, That he hath ſurveyed the whole ſtate of Nature, and ſeen all the Cauſes

Cauſes that are in working, and then muſt aſſert *de facto*, that there is no ſuch thing upon the Loom as that he denies; and alſo that he perfectly underſtands the whole Mind and Will of God, and that he intends no ſuch thing; or elſe he muſt demonſtrate by reaſon, that it is plainly impoſſible, and a flat contradiction, that any ſuch thing ſhould be: either of which you cannot, without intolerable abſurdity, affirm in the preſent Caſe.

So that, as I ſaid, you have nothing but bare ſuſpicions on your ſide (whatever Arguments I have on mine.) Now beſides the inequal balance of nothing againſt ſomething, be it never ſo ſmall, do but conſider what ſtrange imprudence it is to adventure ſo great a ſtake, as all your intereſt in another World amounts to, upon a mere *non putaram*; for what if ſuch a thing ſhould happen to prove true at laſt, what will become of you then, what a ſad condition are you caſt into!

Wiſe Men are wont to value not only certainties, but alſo probabilities, and even contingencies alſo; now ſeeing it is not impoſſible but ſuch a thing may be, and it is of infinite conſequence, if it ſhould be, there is all the wiſdom in the World to be provided for it. You will ſay, It may not be; but that is all that Infidelity it ſelf can enable you to ſay, and then ſure it is far ſafer to ſuppoſe that it may be, for no hurt can come of that; but the danger is unſpeakable on the other ſide, if it ſhould prove to be true. In a word, in ſuch a caſe as this is, it is a wiſe Man's part rather to believe upon ſlight evidence, than to disbelieve upon great preſumptions.

Bioph.

Bioph. I am beholden to you for the Friendly caution you give me; but it is your reaſons I expect at this time, and not your advice.

Schaſt. Thoſe you ſhall have preſently, and do not think I trifle with you, or decline the proof I promiſed, becauſe I proceed thus gradually and ſlowly with you: The true reaſon whereof is, becauſe I would rather your own prudence ſhould encline you to believe, than that my Arguments ſhould preſs you to it, and I much more deſire that you ſhould be ſafe, than that I ſhould have the glory of a Victory; it is only your concern that we go upon, have therefore a little patience that we may rightly underſtand one another, and ſince you have refuſed Scripture-proof, give me leave to ask you particularly what kind of proof you expect of this matter under our conſideration.

What kind of proof and what meaſure of evidence is to be expected in the Principles of Religion.

In the firſt place, I hope you do not require ſenſible evidence of a Day of Judgment: you were ſaying even now, that no Man had ſeen Heaven, and therefore you did not believe it. Poſſibly thoſe words ſlipt from you unadviſedly, however it is (you know) a thing future which we are now debating about, and ſenſible proof cannot be required of that without flat contradiction: It is as if a Man ſhould deſire to ſee that which confeſſedly is not to be ſeen, and that a thing ſhould be that is not, or be and not be at the ſame time; you know you cannot have ſenſible evidence to day that the Sun will riſe to morrow; in ſhort, neither of any thing paſt nor future, but only of that which is preſent.

There

There are ſome Men in this Age, and perhaps you may be acquainted with them, who will only appeal to their ſenſes, and accordingly they reject the Notion of God and of Spirits, meerly becauſe they can ſee no ſuch things. Now if I thought this were your Opinion, I muſt go another way to work than I intended; but if it will content you that I make the Point ſeem reaſonable and clear to the Eyes of your mind, though I do not gratify your bodily Eyes with a ſtrange proſpect, then I will proceed as I deſigned.

Bioph. Well, we are agreed for that. I did, I confeſs, ſpeak of ſeeing Heaven, but there was no contradiction in that; becauſe if there be any ſuch place, it is ſuppoſed to be conſtantly exiſtent, and therefore may be viſible: yet I do not expect to ſee the Judgment till the time comes, becauſe futures are not to be ſeen, but foreſeen. Go on therefore, and give me rational evidence, and it ſhall ſuffice.

Sebaſt. But there is another thing I deſire to be reſolved of, namely, what meaſure or degree of rational evidence you will be ſatisfied with. The reaſon of my enquiry is this, Some men there are who highly pretend to a readineſs to believe upon juſt grounds, but when it comes to tryal, they are humourſome and captious, they will require ſuch evidence as the nature of the thing cannot admit of (even ſuppoſing it to be true) they expect ſuch proof as ſhall leave no room for cavil and exception, ſuch as a Man can find no evaſion from, but that will extort an aſſent from him whether he will or no. Now I muſt tell you, this is very hard and unreaſonable in any caſe whatſoever, for

as

as much as the wit of Man is fitter to pull down than to build up, and it is the eaſieſt thing in the World to find ſhifts and cavils, inſomuch that he muſt believe very little indeed, that will admit of nothing which ſome ſlight objection or other may be made againſt. God himſelf hath provided no remedy for contumacy, and ſuch Men muſt go on, and periſh without Cure; for no Argument can eſcape a captious humour.

Beſides, if ſuch ſtrict demands of ſatisfaction were at any time allowable, yet can they by no means be reaſonably inſiſted upon in ſuch a Caſe as this; for if ſuch irreſiſtible evidence were to be had in this matter, there would be no room for Vertue, it would then be a neceſſary action to believe, and no inſtance of choice, nor any argument of a vertuous mind; for what can be the praiſe or rewardableneſs of doing that which a Man cannot chuſe but do? or what excellency is there in Faith, when there is no pretence in the World for unbelief?

Therefore all that you can juſtly and wiſely expect in the preſent caſe, is, That there be ſufficient ground given you for a diſcreet choice, and over-weight enough in one Scale to incline the judgment of a prudent Man, ſo far that he ſhall ſee it is more reaſonable that he believe, than that he do not. This is very properly to be eſteemed conviction of our reaſon; this is the juſt Standard of Prudence, and this is the Principle that wiſe men govern themſelves by in weighty affairs. And indeed, if no Man ſhould determine himſelf to the purſuit of a buſineſs until there were no objection, no excuſe, colour, or pretence to the contrary, all the no-

bleſt

bleſt projections and moſt profitable and neceſſary undertaking of Mankind, would be nipped and blaſted in the Bud.

Biopb. In truth I do not ſee but your demand is reaſonable, and I muſt yield to you in this particular alſo.

Sebaſt. Then I ask no more.

In order to the ſatisfaction of a Man's judgment, he muſt firſt come to indifference.

Phil. Yes, *Sebaſtian*, let me put you in mind of one thing more, which is, That *Biophilus* will promiſe you to hold the Scales even, otherwiſe an over-weight in either of them will not be diſcernible; my meaning is, that he agree to be ſincerely indifferent, and willing to believe on the one ſide as well as on the other: for I have found by my own experience, that whilſt a Man retains a partial fondneſs for an Opinion, it is not all the Arguments in the World ſhall beat him out of it, he will ſee all that which makes for him as through a magnifying Glaſs, and ſo think it great and conſiderable, and contrariwiſe all that which is againſt him ſhall ſeem little and deſpicable. But when a Man comes to this paſs, that he is content one ſide ſhould be true as well as the other, then (and not till then) the beſt reaſon will carry it. Therefore unleſs you premiſe this, you will ſtrive againſt the ſtream, and diſpute in vain.

Sebaſt. Thank you heartily for that, *Philander*. It is very true, *Biophilus*, that if you oppoſe reſolution and prejudice againſt the diſcourſe I am to make to you, that will be Armor of proof againſt all the Arguments that can be brought, and then we had as good ſtay here as go further and loſe our labour.

But

But why, good *Biophilus*, ſhould you not lie as far towards the Doctrine which I am aſſerting, as towards the contrary? Nay, why ſhould you not look upon it as greatly your intereſt, that there ſhould be another World, and a Judgment at the end of this? It is certain, you and all of us muſt die, there is no peradventure in that, and it were a moſt ſad and diſmal thing to think of it, if Death put an utter end to a Man, ſo that all his comforts and all his hopes expire with him. And I wonder in my heart how any Man can think of Death with any meaſure of patience upon thoſe terms; and that it doth not make him ſullen and melancholy all the days of his life. You will ſay he muſt yield to neceſſity; but that is a remedy worſe than the Diſeaſe (if it be poſſible) to ſeek a cure for Death in deſperation; to tell me there is a neceſſity of dying, is only to tell me there is no help in the caſe, which is the very thing I complain of.

It is greatly a mans intereſt that Religion ſhould be true.

And this conſideration is ſo much the more ſharp and cutting, by how much the more a Man's Life hath been pleaſant and comfortable. As for a Man that hath all his Life time been oppreſſed with Calamities, pinched with Poverty, covered with Obloquy, or afflicted with horrible Pains, *&c.* it may ſeem eaſie to him to die, that ſo he might have that reſt in the Grave which he could not have above Ground; and though he thinks he ſhall be ſenſible of no comfort there, yet he ſhall fare as well as other Men in that State. But for him that hath had good treatment in the World, pleaſant accommodations, tempting fortunes and enjoyments,

for ſuch a Man to think of Death, which will ſpoil him of all his Ornaments, and level him with the Duſt, that will interrupt all his delights, put an end to all his deſigns and projections, and draw a dark veil over all his glories: I ſay, if ſuch a Man hath nothing to comfort him againſt Death, if there be no life after this, but a Man muſt for ever forſake and be forſaken of all his felicities, I cannot ſee how he can poſſibly avoid an unſpeakable abhorrence of it: nay, that's not all neither; for methinks it ſhould render all his preſent enjoyments not only inſipid and loathſom, but even a very torment to him whilſt he is in the midſt of them.

Now why ſhould any Man reſiſt the only remedy in this caſe, the only conſolatory againſt the ſumm of all calamities, which is the hopes of another Life? Why ſhould he be willing to die as the Beaſt dies, and to abondon himſelf to the grave, to rottenneſs and oblivion? It were certainly better never to have been born, than both to live in perpetual fear of dying, and being dead, to be as if a Man had never lived; better never to have taſted the ſweets of life, than to be only tantalized, and by that time he begins to live, to begin to die, and then be eternally deprived of what he juſt had a ſmack and a ſight of.

Nay farther yet, if a Man had lived only like a Beaſt, it had been no great matter to die like a Beaſt: If, I ſay, a Man look'd no farther than his Fodder, had no ſenſe of any thing but eating and drinking, and had a Soul in him that ſerved only for ſalt to keep the Body from putrefaction, ſo that he never look'd about him, made no improvement of himſelf; and had no deſigns

deſigns in his Head, it were leſs matter, if he returned to the Earth, which (like a Mole) he did nothing but root in and turn over whilſt he was upon it. But for a Man of an Active Soul, of improved Parts, of Reaſon and Wiſdom and Uſefulneſs, to be ſmothered in the Grave, ſo that all his Notions and Diſcoveries, all Arts and Sciences; nay, all his Vertues and Gallantry of Mind, all his Hopes and deſigns ſhall be abruptly broken off and buried in Oblivion; this is ſo ſad and diſmal a thing, that it is able to diſcourage all ſtudy and induſtry, all care and culture of a Man's ſelf; for why ſhould I ſtrive to live like a Man, if I muſt die like a Beaſt? Why ſhould I take pains to know, when *by increaſing knowledge, I ſhould but increaſe my ſorrow?* For as much as the more I know, the more I ſhall feel my ſelf miſerable, and indeed become guilty of my own torment: So that if there were no hopes after this preſent life, it would be a more adviſable courſe for a Man to abandon himſelf to the moſt dark and ſqualid Barbariſm, rather than to weary and wear out himſelf in the queſt of knowledge, and better never to apply himſelf to any ſtudy, or to beſtow any pains or coſt upon himſelf; nay, indeed, if it were poſſible, it were deſirable never to know any thing, or to think at all. For why ſhould a Man put a cheat upon himſelf? Why ſhould he take not only unprofitable but vexatious pains? In a word, why ſhould he not ſo live as he muſt die? To all which add, That if there were indeed no other World nor Life hereafter, and if there be any Man that can find in his heart to be fond of living upon thoſe terms, he muſt of neceſſity be a pitiable ſlave

whilſt he continues here; the perpetual fears of death cramping him, and keeping him in continual bondage, that he ſhall not have the ſpirit or courage to dare to do any brave action; but contrariwiſe he will be unavoidably tempted to be a wretched Coward and baſe Fellow, and become a ſordid Paraſite, to flatter and humour every body meerly upon the account of ſelf-preſervation.

Why therefore ſhould any Man be fond of ſuch an uncomfortable, nay, ſuch a ſottiſh and debaſing opinion? Why ſhould not a Man chuſe rather to erect his own mind, and be willing to hope well of himſelf by cheriſhing an expectation, that he may ſurvive his body, and live eternally?

Bioph. There is no queſtion, *Sebaſtian*, but that living for ever is very deſirable, if a Man could hope for ſuch a thing abſolutely, and not clogged with conditions. As for death it ſelf, that would have no great matter of formidableneſs in it, if it be either (as I ſuppoſe it) a perfect interciſion of all ſenſe: Or much leſs, if it were (as the Men of your Perſwaſion uſe to ſpeak) only a dark paſſage to another light. But the miſchief is, that upon your Hypotheſis, a judgment muſt paſs upon a Man firſt, before he can arrive at that other life. Now that is the terrible thing, if I were rid of the danger of that, it would (as you ſay well) be my intereſt to believe all the reſt, in ſpight of all objections to the contrary.

Sebaſt. I do not deſign to impoſe upon you; for it is very true, there is no paſſage into the other World, without undergoing a Teſt or Tryal, whether we be fit for Eternal Life or no.

And

And it is moſt certain alſo, that if a Man die an impious, a wicked and baſe perſon, it were better for him that either he had not been born, or elſe that the grave and oblivion might cover him to all Eternity. But what need this fright any Man whilſt he is alive, and may provide himſelf accordingly? eſpecially ſince the grace of God puts it in our choice and power to be good, and ſo qualified, that we may be out of all danger of miſcarrying in the Judgment.

For, *Biophilus*, can it be thought that God Almighty ſhould ſeek the ruine of his Creatures, or that he can have any deſign upon them to make them eternally miſerable? If he had, there would not be the ſolemnities of a day of Judgment; for he would not need to inſnare us in forms of Law, but might without more ado have deſtroyed us when he pleaſed, and who could reſiſt him, or diſpute the caſe with him? Undoubtedly he is too great a Majeſty to have any little ends to ſerve, and therefore we can ſuſpect no hurt from him, and there could be nothing but the overflowings of his own goodneſs that provoked him to make us at the firſt; and therefore there can be nothing of envy, malignity, or cruelty in any of his counſels and deſigns about us.

And that all theſe are not meer ſayings or ſanguine conjectures of mine, but real truth (beſides all other ways of probation) you may be aſſured by this conſideration, that in all Gods demands from us, as the terms and conditions of our happineſs, or (which is all one) in all the duties he requires at our hands, and in all the obligations of Religion, there is nothing ſevere and diſcouraging, nothing ex-

tremely harsh and difficult, much less impossible: nay, in truth, if things be rightly considered, I believe there will be nothing to be found in any institution of Religion that ever was heard of in the World, that could go so much against the grain with Men, as to tempt them to run the hazard of dying eternally, rather than to comply with it. And if any such were to be found, it were ground enough to assure us, that such institutions proceeded not from God; for such is his Wisdom and Benignity, that he can impose nothing as a severe Task-Master, purely to abridge our liberty, or to break our spirits, and oppress our powers, but only to raise and improve us according to our utmost capacities, and as necessary methods to train us up as Candidates for Eternal life.

I will not deny but there are some restraints put upon us, and some difficulties we must expect to encounter, otherwise Religion would have no excellency in it, nor could we have either the glory or the pleasure in obtaining our end and happiness, if it were won without sweat and labour. But I do confidently assert, that these difficulties (whatever they are) we shall find just reason to undergo with all chearfulness, if we do but compare what Religion promises, with what it commands or imposes. And as for the Christian Religion in particular, all this which I have said is so remarkably true of that, that if any thing hath been represented as a branch and necessary duty thereof, which is of a contrary nature to what I have now supposed; I do not doubt with great ease to make it appear, that such suggestion is either a palpable

ble miſtake, or a notorious ſcandal. Why then, I ſay, ſhould a Man think either ſo ill of God or of himſelf, as to be afraid or unwilling to fall into his hands? You cannot forebode any evil from him, if you are ſatisfied that he is perfect and happy, full and glorious, juſt and good; and therefore you muſt condemn your ſelf of prodigious folly, in not complying with reaſonable and equitable Laws, and of being wilfully acceſſary to your own calamity, if you dare not undergo his Judgment. So that upon the whole matter there can be no reaſon, why you ſhould be unwilling to believe there is ſuch a thing, and that is all I deſire of you at preſent, and I heartily conjure you to be true to your ſelf herein.

Bioph. Well, I am reſolved to be as indifferent as it is poſſible to be: Now therefore prove it.

Sebaſt. That I will do with all poſſible plainneſs and ſincerity; namely, I will make good that there is ſufficient reaſon to incline a prudent Man to expect and believe, that after this life God Almighty will call Men to account, and judge them according to their former actions and behaviour. *The moral demonſtration of a judgment to come.*

Now you know it is the nature of Moral Arguments, not to depend upon one ſingle Evidence, but to conſiſt of the united force of ſeveral conſiderations: Accordingly my preſent proof of a Judgment to come (as aforeſaid) muſt compriſe theſe three particulars.

First, I will ſhew, That the nature and condition of Mankind is ſuch, as to render them fit and capable to come to an account, and to undergo

dergo such a Judgment as we speak of.

Secondly, That it is very agreeable to the Nature and Attributes of God (according to those Notions which we have of him) that he should call Mankind to such an account, and judge them.

Thirdly, That God Almighty actually exercises and displays such a Providence in this present World, as gives earnest before-hand, that he really intends to judge it hereafter.

These three things make way for and succeed each other naturally, and all together amount to a full proof of the Point in hand. Wherefore when I have opened and made them out severally in the order I have laid them down, I will leave it to you to collect the result of them.

Mankind is of such a nature, and endued with such powers, as make it reasonable for him to expect Judgment.

1. I say the nature and condition of Mankind is such, as renders him capable of undergoing a Judgment in another World; and therefore it is reasonable that he expect it accordingly. This will appear by the instances following.

In the first place it is notorious, that Mankind is endued with a large and comprehensive mind, which is not confined to the mere objects of his senses and things present before him, but hath a vast scope and prospect, by means of which he surveys the Universe, embraces the whole World, and takes within his Verge, as well things past and things to come, as those that are present, which no other Creature is capable of but himself. The Beast hath no kind of notice of or concern for what was

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in former time, nor no ſollicitude about what may come after; but only applies it ſelf to the preſent exigencies or conveniencies of the body. But Man is very curious and inquiſitive into Hiſtory, and how things paſt of old, long before he was born, and is alſo very thoughtful and anxious what may befal hereafter when he ſhall be dead and gone. Now this one conſideration alone makes him look as if he were a Being that were concerned in the whole frame of Nature, and in all the revolutions of Providence, and at leaſt of more conſequence than to be a mere Pageant for the ſhort time of this life, or a Muſhroom to ſhoot out of the Earth, and return to it again, and ſo be as if it had never been.

Beſides, we may obſerve, That the mind of Man doth not only conſider the abſolute nature of things as they lie ſingly and ſeverally before it, but compares them together, and eſtimates their relative natures, the mutual reſpects that they have to each other, and the various aſpects and influences they have upon each other; and ſo comparing and conferring things together, raiſes obſervations, makes inferences, deduces concluſions, frames general maximes, thereby brings things into order and method, and raiſes Arts and Sciences. All or any of which things no Creature below himſelf makes any pretence to, or gives any token of. From whence we may conclude not only the pre-eminence of his Nature, but that he is ordained to higher purpoſes.

Moreover, Mankind is endowed with liberty of choice and freedom of will, by virtue of which he doth not only move himſelf by his

own internal Principles and vital Energy, but alſo can determine himſelf to this object or that, and either purſue or deſiſt the proſecution at his own pleaſure: Inſomuch that he is neither carried by the ſwinge of any ſuperiour cauſes, nor fatally allured by the powerful charms of any objects from without, no nor by the efficacy of any Arguments ariſing therefrom, nor any impreſſion whatſoever (ſaving that of God Almighty) can overbear or ſuperſede his own reſolution, but that he can act or deſiſt, ſuſpend proſecution or purſue his own choice, and apply himſelf to this object or that, and follow this argument and motive or the other; he hath ſuch an Helm within himſelf, that he can ſail againſt Wind and Tide; he can move himſelf in a calm, and ſtay himſelf in a ſtorm: In a word, he can move which way, when and how far he will, and ſtop his own carriere when he pleaſes. The truth of this we find by daily experience, and we commonly pleaſe our ſelves too much in this Prerogative of our Natures. We ſee that which is better, and follow that which we know to be worſe; we hear Arguments and reject them, becauſe we will do ſo; we are perſwaded to the contrary, and yet go on; and when and whatſoever we act, we find at the ſame time we could have done quite contrary, if we had pleaſed. Other Creatures either act meerly as they are acted by ſuperiour Cauſes drawn by inviſible wyers, or fatally inclined by the objects and motives before them; but we are put into the hand of our own Counſels, and wholly governed by our ſelves, as to our inward reſolutions and determinations. Now this, as it is a mighty

diſcrimi-

diſcrimination of our Natures from theirs, ſo it hath this peculiar effect, that it renders a Mans actions properly his own, and imputable to himſelf and to nothing elſe, and conſequently fits him to undergo a Judgment for them.

But further yet, to make Mankind more capable of a Judgment, he hath a directive Rule or Law of Reaſon within him, whereby to govern himſelf both in his Elections and Proſecutions, that is, he acts not only freely and undeterminately in reſpect of any cauſe without himſelf, but he hath a light within to guide and direct thoſe free powers of his, that they may not run riot and move extravagantly, by the means of which he is enabled both to make choice of his deſigns, and to ſelect fit and proper methods of accompliſhing them. For as he is not ſtaked down to ſome one particular buſineſs (as generally other Creatures are) but hath great ſcope to expatiate in, and variety to pleaſe himſelf withal: ſo he hath a Card or Compaſs given him to ſail by in that vaſt Ocean which lies before him: that is, he hath a faculty of diſcerning the difference of things, and conſequently can judge what is worthy to be propounded as his poſt and deſign, and alſo to meaſure and adjuſt the means thereunto, which renders him more fit to give an account both of his Elections and Proſecutions.

Nay farther yet, humane Nature by the advantage of this light within him, hath not only a capacity of apprehending and judging of natural good and evil, or ſuch things as are only pleaſant and profitable, or the contrary, but hath alſo notions of higher good and evil, which we commonly call Moral; that is, he finds

finds himſelf obliged to have regard to ſomething elſe beſides and better than his body; namely, either to the Deity, or to the Community of Mankind, or at leaſt to his own better part his Soul and Mind. None of which are at all conſidered by any Creature below Man, and there is hardly any part of Mankind (at leaſt that deſerve to be ſo eſteemed) which doth not think it ſelf concerned in all theſe. For we ſee, whoſoever hath any thing of a Man in him, doth think ſome actions to become or not become him reſpectively, meerly as he is a Man, which would admit of no difference, but be all alike in a Beaſt: Whereupon it is, that a Man cannot diſpenſe with himſelf in the doing of ſeveral things, which are in his power to do, no not in the dark and the greateſt privacy, becauſe every Man that in any meaſure underſtands himſelf, hath a reverence of himſelf, and the effect of this betrays it ſelf in that quick ſenſe which Mankind hath peculiarly of ſhame and honour, which argues him to be accountable to ſome thing higher than his ſenſes.

Above all this, it is conſiderable that Mankind hath not only a ſpeculative apprehenſion of moral good and evil, but a practical and very quick and pungent ſenſe of it, which we call Conſcience, by which he not only remembers and calls to mind whatſoever hath paſt him, but reflecting alſo upon the ends and circumſtances of his own actions, and comparing what he hath done both for matter and manner either with the rule of Reaſon within him, or ſome other Law, he cenſures and judges himſelf accordingly. If he hath done well and vertuouſly; that is, hath approved himſelf to himſelf,

ſelf, he then applauds and comforts himſelf, and feels an unſpeakable ſatisfaction in his own mind: As for Example, If a Man have behaved himſelf gallantly towards his Prince and Country; if he have carried himſelf ingenuouſly and gratefully towards his Friends, his Patrons or Benefactors; if he have been beneficent to any part of Mankind; if he have demonſtrated love to God, or goodneſs and good Men; if he have reſtrained his own rage and paſſions; if he have reſcued an Innocent from the hand of the Oppreſſor, or done any thing of like nature, the heart of every Man naturally in ſuch a caſe feels ſuch an inward delight as ſweetens his Spirits, and chears his very Countenance. On the contrary, if he have been falſe, treacherous and ingrateful; if he have been cruel and oppreſſive, or have ſaid or done any baſe thing, he is preſently upbraided, accuſed, condemned and tormented by himſelf. Now what is all this but *Præjudicium*, a kind of anticipation of the Judgment to come?

But if any Man ſhall pretend this thing called Conſcience, which we now ſpeak of, to be no natural endowment of Humanity, but only the effect of Cuſtom and Education; ſuch a perſon may eaſily undeceive himſelf, if he will but conſider, that all this which I have ſpoken of Conſcience, both as to the matter and form of it (or *Syntereſis* and *Syneideſis*, as Learned Men are wont to diſtinguiſh) is ſo univerſal to all Mankind (at leaſt that have not done violence to themſelves) that it can with no colour be imputed to Education, but muſt be reſolved into the very nature and ſenſe of the Soul. And moreover, a different notion and apprehenſion of

of the fore-mentioned particulars, is so deeply implanted in the minds of Men, that it is impossible any contrary Custom or Education should absolutely and totally efface it; therefore it is the sense of Nature, and consequently a presage of the Divine Judgment.

To all which add in the last place, That the mind of Man seems plainly to be above the Body, and independent of it; for as much as we see, that not only our Reason and the Powers of our Souls, are so far from decaying with the Body, that contrariwise they grow more strong and vigorous by those very causes which impair the Body, I mean, by Age, Exercise and Experience. Besides, it is easily observable, that our Souls do, as often as they please, act quite contrary to the interests and inclinations of our Bodies, and frequently controul the passions thereof, as well as correct and over-rule the Verdict of our Senses. Therefore it is not at all probable, that they should perish with our Bodies, but survive to some further purposes, especially if we take in what I intimated before, namely, the consideration of the shortness of the time of this life, which is so very inconsiderable for so excellent a Being, as the Soul to display it self in, that it seems unworthy of all the aforesaid perfections, and more unworthy of the contrivance of that Wisdom which made us to order it so, unless it be that Mankind is placed here only in a state of probation, and is to be tried hereafter in order to a more lasting subsistence and duration. Which in consideration of all the premises, he cannot but be thought capable of, at least if there be a Judge as fit to judge him, as he is fit to undergo a Judgment. Which brings me to my second Branch.

Bioph.

Biop. Hold a little, I pray, good *Sebaſtian*, you have ſpoken many things well and worthily of the pre-eminence of humane Nature, and ſome of them ſuch as are not only ſufficient to erect a Man's Spirits, and provoke him to hope well of himſelf, but alſo do render it in ſome ſort probable, that we are deſigned for ſome higher uſes, than we commonly apply our ſelves to. Nevertheleſs you have not reached your point, nor will all you have ſaid attain the end you propounded, unleſs you go farther, and prove the Soul of Man to be a Spirit or immaterial Subſtance (as the Men of your way are wont to ſpeak) that ſo there may be a plain foundation for its exiſtence out of the Body. Without which, let it be as excellent a Being as it can, and adorned with as many other Perfections as you can imagine, it cannot be capable of ſtanding at a Tribunal, and undergoing ſuch a Judgment in another World as we are ſpeaking of.

Sebaſt. I could have wiſhed you would have given me leave to lay all the parts of my Argument together before you, that ſo you might have taken a view of it intire and all at once: and then you might have objected, as you ſhould have ſeen cauſe. But however I will comply with your Method, and as to that which you have thought fit now to interpoſe, I anſwer theſe two things.

First I ſay, It is not neceſſary to the buſineſs in hand, that the Soul be proved to be ſtrictly immaterial and capable of exiſting and acting out of the Body; for as much as at the Day of Judgment I ſuppoſe the Body ſhall be raiſed again: And then if it ſhould be ſo, that all the

powers

powers of the Soul were laid asleep by Death until that time; yet now upon a re-union with their proper Organs, they would revive again. So that I did not in my proof fall short of the mark I aimed at, but you out-shoot the point in your demand: For whether the Soul be a spiritual substance or no, so long as those perfections, which we have enumerated, belong to it, there is nothing wanting to make it capable of undergoing a Judgment. But,

The Soul of man proved to be immaterial.

Secondly, To speak my own mind plainly and to come home to your satisfaction, I must tell you, That as for my part, I do not doubt but that the Soul of Man is properly and strictly of a spiritual Nature; so I am confident that those things which we have ascribed to it, do sufficiently prove it to be so; seeing it is impossible to salve those *Phænomena*, or to give any tolerable account of those great accomplishments and performances of the Soul before specified from meer matter, let it be modified or circumstantiated how it can.

Simple perception of Objects is of the lowest rank of humane perfections, and indeed is not proper to humane Nature, but common to Brutes; yet this seems impossible to be performed by meer matter. For the Eye, though it be a very admirable and exquisite Organ, can by no means be said to perceive the objects of sight, but only to transmit or present them to some perceptive power. It doth, I say, only as a Glass represent the Species or Image of the thing, which even a dead Eye or an hole, will in some measure perform; but it makes no judgment of the object at all, as appears by this,

that

that all objects are tranſmitted, reverſed, or with the heels upward, through the Eye, and ſo left, till ſome higher power ſets them right and on their Legs, and judges of their diſtance and other circumſtances.

Now if it be ſo, that matter thus advantageouſly diſpoſed and improved, as in the admirable Structure of the Eye, cannot perform that one act of ſimple perception, what ſhall become of all thoſe nobler actions of the Soul? and into what ſhall they be reſolved? Such as ſelf-motion, the ſtrange celerity of thought, memory of that which is paſt, prudence and forecaſt for that which is to come, and a thouſand other ſtrange operations. Is it imaginable that meer matter ſhould underſtand, argue, diſpute, conſider and conferr the relation of one thing to another, and thence inferr conſequences and make concluſions? Is it likely that meer body and quantity ſhould be ſenſible of ſhame and honour; nay, be conſciencious too, and accuſe, condemn, and torture it ſelf; or which is moſt wonderful of all, check, controul, deny, limit, and mortifie it ſelf? He that will undertake to ſhew how all theſe things may be performed by Atoms and Motion only, is a ſubtil Mechaniſt indeed, and I do not doubt but at the ſame rate ſuch a Man may be able to make a new World, when he pleaſes, with the ſame Atoms as Materials. For it is evident, there is more intricacy in this little World of Man, than in the whole Fabrick of Heaven and Earth beſides.

Wherefore if matter or body cannot perform the aforeſaid Operations, then the Soul of Man, which doth perform them, muſt be

acknowledged to be a ſpiritual ſubſtance.

Bioph. In troth you talk very ſhrewdly; but for my life I cannot underſtand what you mean by this thing which you call Spirit, and therefore I reject the Notion as gibberiſh and nonſenſe.

Sebaſt. Softly, good *Biophilus*, what reaſon is there for that haſty concluſion? Muſt we needs deny every ſuch thing to be, as is hard to underſtand? Muſt we, like dull Boys, tear out the Leſſon that is difficult to learn? Is nothing true but what is eaſie, nor poſſible but what is facile? But beſides, let me tell you upon ſecond thoughts, there is not more difficulty in underſtanding the Nature of Spirits, than there is in conceiving how all the aforeſaid operations ſhould be performed with them, no nor half ſo much neither; ſo that nothing is gotten by the objection; for it is a very vain thing to object difficulty, when at the ſame time you are forced to acknowledge the thing to be neceſſary. But why, I pray you, what is the cauſe that ſpiritual ſubſtance is not as intelligible as corporeal?

Bioph. O Sir, there is a vaſt difference in the caſe, I can ſee and feel the latter, but ſo I cannot the former.

Sebaſt. Nay believe me, there you are out, you ſee and feel only the accidents of a bodily ſubſtance, but not the ſubſtance it ſelf, no more than you can ſee or feel a Spirit.

Bioph. Pardon me, at leaſt I ſee and feel the bodily ſubſtance by the acidents; that is, I am aſſured of its preſence and exiſtence, and I can affirm ſuch things of it upon that teſtimony of my ſenſes.

Sebaſt.

Sebaſt. And you may affirm as much of a Soul (if you pleaſe) though you can neither ſee nor feel it, foraſmuch as you plainly perceive the properties and operations of it.

Bioph. That is cloſe and to the purpoſe, I confeſs; but ſtill I cannot tell what to make of this thing called Spirit, for I can frame no Image of it in my imagination, as I can do of other things.

Sebaſt. Why, there is it now. I perceive how, *Biophilus*, you have a deſire to ſee with your Mouth, and hear with your Eyes. For as reaſonably every jot may you expect to do either of thoſe, as to frame a ſenſible imagination of a Spirit. That which we call Imagination (you know) is nothing elſe but the impreſs of the colour, bigneſs, or ſome other accidents (of a thing that hath been preſented to our ſenſes) retained in, and (it may be) a little diverſified by our phancy. But now if a Spirit have no colour nor bulk, nor ſuch other accidents to be repreſented to our phancy through our outward ſenſes, how is it poſſible you ſhould have an image of it there? No, no; ſpiritual Beings are only capable of affording us an intellectual Idea; namely, our higher facülty of Reaſon from obſervation of their effects and operations, concludes their Eſſence, and takes an eſtimate of their Nature; and indeed it is a flat contradiction to require any other evidence of that kind of Beings.

Bioph. This kind of Diſcourſe is very ſubtil, and I cannot tell what to object farther to it; go on therefore to your ſecond Branch, perhaps there I may better cope with you.

Sebaſt. The ſecond ſtep which I take to-

The natural Notions Men have of God, render it reasonable to expect that he will judge the World.

wards the proof of a Judgment to come, is, that as on the one side Mankind appears to be fit and capable of being judged hereafter; so on the other hand it is agreeable to the Nature and Attributes of God, and to those Notions we have of a Deity, that he should call the World to such an account, and this appears briefly thus.

The most common and most natural Notion which Men have of the Divine Majesty, is, That he is a Being absolutely perfect, that is, (amongst other accomplishments) that he is a most powerful, wise, just and good Being; there is hardly any body that thinks of a God, but considers him under these Attributes and Perfections, and he that divests him of any of these Perfections, renders him neither an object of fear nor of love, and consequently not a God; insomuch that were it not for politick ends, namely, to avoid infamy or other punishment amongst Men, doubtless those that deny to him any of these Attributes, had as good flatly deny him to have any Being at all.

Now if these things be included in the natural Notion of God, they not only capacitate him to be a Judge of the World, if he pleases, but give great assurance that he will do it; for if he be a wise Being, he cannot but see how things go, and particularly how his Creatures carry themselves here below; if he be powerful, he hath it in his hand to rectifie those disorders he observes amongst them, and both to punish the evil and to reward the good. And if he be good and just, it cannot but be expected from him that he will set things to rights

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one time or other, when his Wiſdom ſhall think fit; but it is evident, this is not done exactly and anſwerably to thoſe Attributes of his in this World, therefore there is no reaſon to doubt but he will aſſuredly do it in another World; and therefore the Scripture tells us, *He hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteouſneſs*, &c.

Biopb. Not too faſt, good *Sebaſtian*. I know not certainly what apprehenſions other Men may have; but for my part, though I do acknowledge a God (and that not only politically (as you ſuſpect) but upon the principles of Reaſon, yet I muſt profeſs to you, I do not think the natural Notion of God includes thoſe Attributes you ſpeak of. Why may there not be a God, and he only a neceſſary Agent, and then there is no danger of an after-reckoning with him?

Sebaſt. Ah, *Biophilus*, I am heartily ſorry to find ſo unworthy a Notion of God ſtill to find any room in your thoughts (though it were but in ſuſpicion only.) It is very certain indeed, that if he be only a neceſſary Agent, then all fear of a Judgment is diſcharged, and as certain that all Religion can then be nothing elſe but a groundleſs Superſtition at the beſt. For then God muſt needs by a very tame Deity which Men may play withal, and abuſe at pleaſure, as the Frogs did by their wooden King in the Fable.

God not a neceſſary Agent.

But then in the Name of Goodneſs, what need is there of any God at all, if a neceſſary Agent will ſerve the turn? Why can we not as well ſuppoſe the World to be eternal, as

make such a contemptible Being, as a necessary Agent is, to be eternal, only to give beginning to the World.

Or rather, why if we attribute one Perfection, *i. e.* Eternity to him, why not all the rest, which seem to be inseparable from it? For as much as it is not imaginable how the first Cause should be the meanest of all, and he that gave those other Perfections to other things, should be destitute of them himself.

Or how can we believe that such a fettered, impotent, unthinking and unwise Being, should make a World in that Beauty and Perfection which this World consists of? Or at least how is it possible that a natural or necessary Agent (which is like a Gally-Slave Chained down to his Bench, and confined to his Task and Subject) should make a World with such curiosity and diversity of things, yet with that exquisite order and harmony which we observe in Nature?

Do you think that the frame of things could not possibly have been any otherwise than they are? Can you phansie that nothing could have been better nor worse than it is now? If you see any footsteps of wisdom or choice, any possibility that any thing should have been otherwise than it is, you forego your necessary Agent.

Do you not see great and manifest instances of design and contrivance in the order of things, *viz.* one thing fitted to another, and one subordinate to another, and altogether conspiring to some publick end and use? Now sure a necessary Agent could not guide things so, because it hath no ends or designs of its own.

Again,

Again, if God be a neceſſary Agent, I would fain be reſolved how it came to paſs that we are not ſo too? I think you granted me even now that we chuſe our own way, propound ends to our ſelves, and voluntarily purſue them, when we could (if we pleaſed) as freely chuſe and act contrary, and this we juſtly glory in as the perfection of our Nature. Now how to conceive that I ſhould be a free Agent, and that he who made me ſo ſhould be a neceſſary one; that is, that the effect ſhould be more excellent than the cauſe, neither I, nor (as I ſuſpect) any body elſe, can underſtand?

But I need not in this place induſtriouſly ſet my ſelf to confute this odd conceit of God's being only a neceſſary Agent, becauſe in my third branch I ſhall fundamentally undermine it, and (as I think) leave neither colour nor pretence for it, and therefore with your leave I now haſten to that.

Bioph. Go on then in God's name.

Sebaſt. My third and laſt Point for the proof of a Judgment to come is this; God doth actually exerciſe ſuch a Providence in and over the World for the preſent, as gives great aſſurance that he will judge it hereafter. For theſe are as it were the two ſeveral ends of the ſame Chain, a Providence here, and a Judgment hereafter. They do naturally and mutually draw on each other. If there be a Judgment to come, there muſt be a provident Eye over the World for the preſent in order to it; that is, God muſt ſo mind the World, that he perfectly underſtand how things go, how

There is an actual Providence in this world, therefore there will be a Judgment in the next.

Men carry themſelves, what there is amiſs amongſt them, what requires puniſhment, and what deſerves a reward; otherwiſe he cannot be ſaid to judge, foraſmuch as without this it might rather be ſaid, There is a day of Execution coming, than a day of Judgment. And on the other ſide, if there be a Providence in this World, and it be true that God obſerves how Men carry themſelves towards him, it muſt ſpeak his intention to reward and puniſh hereafter in proportion to ſuch obſervation; for otherwiſe that Providence would be fruitleſs and to no purpoſe, it would be a meer matter of vain curioſity, and a needleſs trouble to the Divine Majeſty, as the *Epicureans* objected. But now that God doth exerciſe ſuch a Providence in this World, as from whence we may reaſonably preſage a Judgment to come, I think will abundantly appear by theſe three things.

1. There hath been ſuch a thing as we call Prophecy or Prediction of things before they came to paſs, which cannot be without a Providence.

2. There have been Miracles, which could not be without the Divine Interpoſition.

3. There are frequent (though not altogether miraculous) inſtances in all Ages of a Divine preſence in, and influence upon, the affairs of the World.

Prophecy a certain Argument of a Providence in the World.

1. Firſt, I ground the aſſertion of a Providence in this preſent World upon the Prophecies and Predictions of things beforehand, which have been verified by real effects in their reſpective times and ſeaſons. It is evident, that whoſoever is able certainly

certainly to foretel things before they are, muſt ſee through all the Series of Cauſes which produce ſuch events: Eſpecially if he define alſo the preciſe time and other circumſtances of the accompliſhment; but above all, whoſoever ſhall declare before-hand, not only what ſhall come to paſs according to the courſe of natural and neceſſary Cauſes, but alſo ſuch things as are caſual and contingent, or ſubject to the choice and indifferency of free and voluntary Agents, muſt have a mighty reach with him, and make a very curious and accurate inſpection into the Conjunctions and Conſpiracy of all things as well as into their particular Natures, Tendencies and Inclinations: For as every Effect muſt have its Cauſes before it can be; ſo the prediction of ſuch effect muſt depend upon a certain knowledge of thoſe reſpective cauſes which are pregnant of it; therefore if there ever have been ſuch a thing as Prophecy, there is a Providence.

Now for the matter of Fact, or that there have been certain and punctual predictions of things long before they came to paſs, is the conſtant belief of all Nations, and he that denies it muſt give the Lye to the greateſt and beſt part of Mankind. You may remember that *Tully* purſues this Argument in his Books, *De Divinatione*, and he there gives too many and too remarkable inſtances of it, to be denied or eluded; but I ſhall chuſe to ſet before you only two paſſages out of the holy Scripture to this purpoſe. For though I perceive you have not ſuch a reverence for thoſe Books as they deſerve, yet ſuch palpable matters of Fact as I ſhall inſtance in, and which were of ſo publick

a con-

a concern and general notice, as whereupon the revolution of whole Nations depended, can afford no ground for calling in question the historical Truth of them. And let me tell you, I make choice of these instances out of those Writings, for no other Cause but for the notoriety of the fact, and the easiness of confutation, if it had been otherwise than true.

The former of the two passages is the Prediction of the slavery of the Children of *Israel* in the Land of *Egypt*, and their miraculous deliverance thence, above four hundred years before it came to pass, and the accomplishment (when the time came) answering the Prediction precisely to a very day, so as to be observed by the whole Body of the People, and the remembrance of it perpetuated by an anniversary Solemnity ever after, as you may see *Exod.* xij. 41.

The other instance is the Babylonish Captivity, which was foretold above seventy years before it came to pass, and that in a time of the greatest unlikelihood that any such calamity should befal; namely, it was Propheſied of when the *Jews* were in the greatest Peace and Prosperity. And then for the term of this Captivity, that was foretold to last seventy Years, neither more nor less; and both these periods (as well as other circumstances) were exactly, and to admiration, hit in the event of things.

Now in both these instances, the things were Propheſied of so long before-hand, there were so many obstacles in the way of their accomplishment, and so much of the will of Man also interested in both the Cases, and yet notwithstanding such punctual exactness is to be seen in

in the Event, that it is plainly impoſſible that humane wit ſhould ſo much as gueſs probably at them; therefore the Predictions muſt be grounded upon Divine intimation: And then God is ſo far from being a neceſſary Agent, that it is apparent he minds the World, and looks narrowly into all the parts of it, from one end to another, and governs and manages inferiour Cauſes.

Miracles neceſſarily argue a Providence.

2. My ſecond proof of an actual Providence in this World is from Miracles. By a Miracle I mean any thing coming to paſs, which is either for the matter or manner of it above the power of natural Cauſes, or at leaſt contrary to their eſtabliſh'd courſe and order; whether it be effected by heightning them above their ordinary pitch, or accelerating their motion, or by ſuddenly bringing thoſe cauſes together, which lay at a diſtance; or whether it be by depreſſing, ſuſpending or ſuperſeding any of them.

And I reaſon thus: If any thing have ever been brought to paſs above the capacity or out of the method of the natural and common Cauſes, then there is an active Deity which exerts his power in that caſe. Or if ever the courſe of Nature hath been interrupted, it muſt be by the interpoſition of the ſupreme Cauſe: For it is neither intelligible, that Nature ſhould go out of courſe of it ſelf, without its own decay and failure; nor poſſible that being once ſo out of courſe, it ſhould ever be able to recover it ſelf into its former order without the help of Omnipotency: Therefore if ever there have been a Miracle in the World, there is proof of a Providence.

Now

Now that such extraordinary things, as we here suppose, have happened, cannot be doubted without great ignorance, or denied without impudence. I know there is a sort of witty Men (in their way) who endeavour to put a slight upon Miracles, and therefore are very captious and critical in such cases as this; but if they can elude some occurrences that have been believed or pretended miraculous, yet they will never be able to evade them all. And if there have been but one acknowledged Miracle in all the time of this World, it will be sufficient to prove a Providence. They will perhaps impute some Cures that have been said to be done by Miracle, to the efficacy of some Medicine, although they can neither tell us what that specifick remedy was, nor much less tell us how the Symptoms should so suddenly cease upon the use of it. It may be they will tell you in the general (with confidence enough) that the strange things done in *Egypt* and in the Wilderness, were effected by the sudden application of Actives to Passives; but cannot so much as pretend to satisfie any man how such remote Causes were brought together and exalted to such an extraordinary degree of efficacy, as to produce such admirable effects on the sudden as those Cases import.

Or if they could speak tolerable sence in some of those particulars, yet what natural account can be given of the raising of the dead, or of unlearned Mens speaking all kind of Languages in an Instant? What natural Cause will they assign of the Sun's standing still in *Joshua*'s time? Or of that preternatural Eclipse at our Saviour's Passion? What could intercept the Sun's light when

when the two Luminaries were in oppoſition? Or what reſtored it to its motion again when it was interrupted, as in the former inſtance? Or to its light again when it intermitted, as in the latter inſtance? To endeavour to give natural accounts of theſe things, will prove as abſurd and ridiculous to reaſon, as to deny the matter of fact, is void of Faith and Religion.

But if any of theſe inſtances will not paſs with ſuch Men, becauſe they were over, long before our time, or becauſe the truth of them depends upon the Authority of Scripture; there are other innumerable paſſages in all Ages not liable to that Exception, that cannot be reſolved into any Cauſe leſs than a Supreme and Omnipotent. Amongſt which, what will they ſay to this which happens almoſt every Year? Namely, that after a long wet Seaſon, it ſhall ſuddenly clear up and be fair Weather again; and contrariwiſe after a long dry Seaſon, it ſhall unexpectedly be wet and rainy. Whereas if they look only to natural Cauſes, the quite contrary muſt happen. Foraſmuch as the more rain hath been at any time, the more may be ſtill, becauſe there are the more vapours from whence Clouds are raiſed; and the longer a dry Seaſon hath laſted, there is every day the leſs reaſon to expect rain, becauſe there want vapours out of which it ſhould be raiſed. Now to impute this ſudden and admirable change only to the Winds, is to beg the Queſtion; for it is well enough known, that the Winds depend upon Vapours as well as Rain; and to aſcribe it to the Stars, is to confeſs an humourſome reſolution, that right or wrong we will ſhut God out of the World. But this leads me to my

3. Third

More ordinary instances of a Providence in the world.

3. Third proof of a present Providence, *viz.* from the more frequent and ordinary instances of a Divine influence upon the affairs of the World. The effects of which, though they are not accounted miraculous, because they are common, yet they give sufficient indication of Divine Administration. And of this kind, there are so many which offer themselves to an observant mind, that to seek flaws, and go about to make specious objections against some few of them, will be rather an Argument of resolved unwillingness to believe, than of any just grounds of Infidelity. For like as in a great Cable made up of several smaller Cords, if perchance some of the threds should flaw or break, yet the remainder will be able to bear the stress of whatsoever use it shall be put to.

Now under this Head I reckon in the first place, as very observable, that there is scarcely any great thing ever brought about in the World, which God may not be seen to have an hand in; and that may be collected generally from the inadequateness of the visible means to most notable productions: As when great preparations are defeated or laid aside, and mean and inconsiderable ones do the business. This is that which *Solomon* observed long ago, *That the battel is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift, nor bread to men of understanding:* And we cannot want an Example for it nearer hand, when we remember the Restauration of King *Charles* II.: For it pleased God to deal in that particular, as he did by *Gideon*'s Army, when he dismissed the greatest part of the Forces,

ces, and did his buſineſs with a few, and thoſe very unlikely for ſuch an Atchievement.

But more admirable than this, is the preſervation of the holy Scripture in all Ages, both from total abolition by the flames of Perſecution, and from corruption, by the capricious fancies of ſuch Men as would neither ſincerely believe it, nor abſolutely reject it. Such alſo is the preſervation of the Chriſtian Religion, when all the wit and all the power of the World combined together againſt it; and ſuch was the ſucceſs of the Apoſtles in propagating that Religion, and planting the Chriſtian Church, when a few Fiſher-men leavened the World with a Doctrine quite againſt the grain of it, and naked Truth prevailed againſt Authority, Art and Intereſt in conjunction.

Hitherto alſo I reduce the maintenance of Magiſtracy and Civil Government; and I look upon it as a ſtanding evidence of a Providence, that the ſtrong bands of wicked and refractary Men ſhould ſtand in awe of a ſingle Man like themſelves, only becauſe he is inveſted with Authority. This, if it be duly conſidered, is very ſtrange, and can be reſolved into nothing but a Providence. Nor is it leſs ſtrange, that conſidering the great numbers of evil Men, their ſecrecy and cloſeneſs, their cunning and falſhood, their envy and neceſſity, their activity and ſelfiſhneſs, they ſhould be able to do no more hurt in the World than they do. Why do they not aſſaſſinate whom they pleaſe? Or what is the reaſon that they do not forſwear Men out of their lives and fortunes, and act whatſoever their revenge or covetouſneſs or luſt ſhall prompt them to? And no account can be

be given of this, but the powerful reſtraint of Providence.

Moreover, there are remarkable Examples in all Ages of evil Men dogged by their own guilt, and tortured by their own Conſciences, whenas no body elſe either accuſed or hurt them; and on the other ſide, as frequent inſtances of vertuous Men, who have been very comfortable under great difficulties, and whoſe ſpirits have been born up with an admirable bravery under ſuch preſſures as would ordinarily cruſh and ſink other Men: And this, although the perſons thus carrying themſelves, were otherwiſe of no remarkable ſtrength or courage. Neither of which paſſages can be reſolved into any other Cauſes, than the mighty influence of a Providence.

Nay further it is very obſervable, how ſtrangely ſometimes ſecret ſins are brought to light, eſpecially ſuch as Murder and Treachery, and where all Arts and Advantages were made uſe of for concealment; ſuch perſons becoming their own accuſers, when no body elſe could do it for them, and not unuſually their own Executioners too.

Above all theſe, there are ſome inſtances of vengeance befalling very flagitious Men, ſo ſignally, and with ſuch pat and ſignificant circumſtances, that (without any uncharitableneſs) we may be led by the ſuffering to the ſin, as in the famous caſe of *Adonibezek*, *Judg.* i. 7. whoſe barbarous uſage of threeſcore and ten Kings, cutting off their Thumbs and great Toes, and making them, like Dogs, gather their meat under his Table, was repaid upon himſelf in the ſame ſeverity. Of kind to which

are

are thoſe pannick fears, and ſhiverings that oftentimes attend blood-guilty Men as long as they live: and though they may have eſcaped revenge from the hand of Men; yet this, as a *Cain's* mark ſet upon them by the hand of God, indelebly ſticks by them, and follows them to their Graves.

It is needleſs to ſay any thing more on this ſubject, for as much as every Man that doth not wilfully ſhut his Eyes, may collect inſtances to this purpoſe, both from the Government of the World in general, and from his own Fortunes in particular. For beſides the quiet ſerenity and comfortableneſs (in token of the Divine favour) which uſually attends a vertuous courſe of life, and the anxiety, torment and uneaſineſs, which as frequently (in teſtimony of the Divine diſlike) attends a wicked and flagitious one; it is not a very unuſual, nor (to be ſure) an unpleaſant ſight, to behold the former crowned with ſignal ſucceſs and Wordly proſperity, and the latter puniſhed with ſhame and beggery: and this ſometimes ſhall happen in ſuch circumſtances, when there is nothing to which this different ſucceſs can be imputed but meerly Divine Providence, foraſmuch as the latter ſhall otherwiſe be more cunning for the World, and every whit as induſtrious and frugal as the former; but Divine Providence only makes the diſcrimination, whilſt the one is under the bleſſing of Heaven, and the other is apparently blaſted and curſed.

And now what think you, *Biophilus*, upon the whole matter: have I not acquitted my ſelf in all the three things I propounded? And now laying all theſe things together, is not

here ſufficient evidence to determine a prudent man in the caſe, and to ſatisfie him that there is a Providence in this World, and conſequently that there will be a Judgment hereafter?

Biophil. I cannot tell, *Sebaſt.* I confeſs you have ſaid many very conſiderable things, and ſome of them beyond what I could have expected in the caſe. But I have one main Objection, which eſpecially touches the laſt Branch of your Argument, and which, if it ſtick by you, all you have ſaid will ſignifie nothing; but if you come clearly off from it, I ſhall not know what to think of the buſineſs. It is this, in ſhort: I do not ſee any ſuch ſettled and conſtant method in the management of the affairs of this World, as muſt neceſſarily argue a Providence; for in particular, notwithſtanding all you have ſaid it cannot be denied, that very often the beſt of Men are oppreſt and born down by ill Fortune; and contrariwiſe evil Men are very happy and proſperous: therefore it may ſeem that thoſe inſtances which you collect in favour of your opinion, may happen by chance, rather than by the diſpenſation of a Providence; and then if there be no Providence in this World, by your own Argument, there can be no Judgment hereafter.

A Vindication of Divine Providence in the obſcurity of ſome of its Diſpenſations in this life.

Sebaſt. If that be all, or the main of what you have to object, I am in hope to ſee ſome good iſſue of this Conference: for in the firſt place you know, that which is impeached by this Objection, is but one ſingle inſtance out of many which I have brought for the aſſertion of a Providence; and conſequently if this ſhould fail,

fail, or if I ſhould yield you all that the objection pretends to, yet ſo long as the other are unſhaken by it, that great Doctrine may ſtand firm notwithſtanding; for it is but as if you ſhould pick one ſingle ſtone out of an huge building, or (as I ſaid before) find a flaw in ſome one thread of a great Cable, neither of which can weaken or endanger the one or the other. But then beſides, you cannot be ignorant that this which you now mention, is an old thred-bare exception worn out of all faſhion by the old Atheiſts and *Epicureans*, and which hath been canvaſſed and baffled over and over by Men of all Ages and of ſeveral Perſwaſions, by *Job*, by *David*, by *Solomon*, nay by *Tully*, *Seneca*, *Plutarch*, and ſeveral others, that it is a great argument of the poverty of your Cauſe to be ſeen in it now a-days, and may juſtly excuſe my labour in confuting it. However becauſe you think fit to give it countenance, I will briefly ſay theſe three things in the caſe, *viz.*

Firſt, That ſome meaſure of intricacy or obſcurity in the diſpenſation of Divine Providence, is no argument againſt it, but for it.

Secondly, That there are very great reaſons aſſignable why it may pleaſe the Divine Majeſty to proceed ſometimes indiſcriminately, and keep no conſtant viſible method in the diſtributions of good and evil in this preſent life.

Thirdly, Yet however this be ſometimes obſcure, there are at other times ſufficient and legible inſtances of a diſtinguiſhing Providence.

1. Some meaſure of intricacy in the diſpenſations of Divine Providence, is ſo far from be-

ing an argument againſt it, that it is a great argument for it. For if we do not make God a meer neceſſary Agent (which I hope I have ſatisfied you in) we muſt allow ſomething to his Prerogative and Soveraignity, and conſequently grant that he may do ſome things, becauſe he will do ſo, and whereof he doth not make us acquainted with the reaſons; and we may very well allow to his Wiſdom, to have a reach beyond us, and to have other meaſure to govern the World by, than we could have made for him. What, ſhall we call God to an account of his Management? Shall he not govern the World at all, unleſs he order it juſt as we would have him? This is apparently ſo far from being reaſonable, that it would be much more ſo to conclude on the contrary; namely, that if there were no depths in the Divine Counſel which we could not fathom, no Meanders in the way of Providence, which we could not trace, it would be very ſuſpicious, whether there were any thing of Divinity in the whole buſineſs. For if things were conſtantly managed one way without any variation, we ſhould be apt to think all was under the rigid Laws of a fatal Neceſſity. If on the other ſide there were no rule to be obſerved, no footſteps of any method, then we ſhould be tempted to think Chance ruled the World; but when we obſerve an intermixture of theſe two, *viz.* that there is a rule, though there be ſome exceptions from it, then we have reaſon to conclude, that all is under a powerful and a free Agent, who if he be alſo infinitely wiſe, cannot but ſee reaſon for ſeveral things which we cannot comprehend.

2. There

2. There are very great and weighty reasons assignable why in this particular instance of Providence (namely in the distribution of good and evil in this World) the Divine Majesty should not be obliged to gratifie our curiosity with a plain account of his proceedings, but make some exceptions to his general rule; amongst which these following are considerable.

First, Because such a constant and visible exercise of distributive Justice, as your objection seems to require, would be such an irrefragable and palpable evidence of a Providence, as would leave no room for the discovery of ingenuity or a virtuous disposition; it would deprive Men of the liberty of their choice, whether they would be Atheistical, or devout and religious: and consequently there would be no excellency in Piety and Vertue. For as I have said before in a like case) it could be no argument of love to God or Goodness, that a Man took care to serve and please God, if he constantly stood over us in a visible and undeniable Providence; so as that every offender were taken in every fact, and presently led to Execution; and on the other side, if every vertuous action were forthwith rewarded and crowned. In short, it is not agreeable to the Mind of God to overrun the freedom of our choice, since he hath endowed us with it, nor to supersede that distinctive faculty of our Nature; for should he do so, he should act contrary to himself and to his own Glory, as well as to the nature and condition of Mankind.

Again, Secondly, A checkered and diversified method of Divine Providence, wherein

there is an intertexture of prosperity and adversity in the fortunes of vertuous Men, tends more to their improvement than a more regular and constant Providence would do. For as a continued course of prosperity, is too apt to tempt Men to be wanton and careless; so a perpetual series of adversity would be as apt to sink and depress their spirits: But a middle way of interchange in their condition, balances them on both sides, and maintains them in a more even temper and conversation. And for this reason it pleases the Divine Wisdom to make such false steps as you are apt to imagine them to be.

To which add in the third place, That herein lies the very secret of Divine Wisdom, and by this very way he doth most effectually assure us of the point in question (namely, a Judgment to come) in that there is such apparent necessity of it. For if the Divine Majesty should let the present World run at random, and interpose himself in no case to check the hurry, and punish the disorder, there would seem no reason to expect Justice from him hereafter, who gave no token of it all this while, and then on the other side, if he interposed so frequently and constantly as to leave no irregularity unpunished, nor any brave action unrewarded, there would be no business left, nor no need of a Day of Judgment. Whereas by affording us some plain instances of his discrimination in this World, we are satisfied that he minds how things go, and is able to judge; and yet by permitting several other things to run riot, and seemingly to be unanimadverted upon, he hath as it were cut out work for a Day of Judgment.

3. Not-

3. Notwithſtanding all this, as I ſaid before, there are ſome ſufficient and undeniable inſtances of a diſtinguiſhing Providence in this World. I have granted to you, that ſometimes the ways of God are intricate and involved, and I have offered at ſome reaſons of it, to which many others might have been added, and amongſt the reſt that by this means we may be kept humble and modeſt, and taught to admire and reverence God, rather than to judge or pronounce of him. For theſe, I ſay, and other reaſons beſt known to infinite Wiſdom, he thinks fit ſometimes to loſe us in the Meander of his ways; yet I ſay they are not always thus obſcure, but ſometimes he treads ſuch plain and direct paths, that we may eaſily follow him. And of this I have ſet before you ſeveral Examples already, and whoſoever will diligently attend to it, may eaſily collect more; but I will not omit to put you in mind of one great ſtanding one, and (as far as is poſſible) beyond all exception, and that was in the Hiſtory of the Jewiſh Nation, who were infallibly ſure to be happy and moſt remarkably proſperous ſo long as they ſtuck to the true God and the Laws he had given them by *Moſes*, and as ſure to be ſignally miſerable and calamitous, whenſoever they apoſtatized from their God, or debauched their Religion. So that that People was placed as a light upon a Mountain, and were an illuſtrious inſtance to all the World of that great Truth we are now diſcourſing of; and if there were no more inſtances of this kind, that alone would be ſufficient for the purpoſe.

Bioph. I muſt confeſs, if the ſtory be true,

there was a very ſtrange Fate attended that People.

Sebaſt. Fate, do you call it? What colour or pretence in the World is there for imputing thoſe admirable revolutions to Fate? Could blind Fate make diſtinction of Perſons and Actions, and apply it ſelf in the diſtribution of good or evil in proportion to Mens deſerts or miſcarriages? Do not diſparage your own diſcretion ſo much, as to uſe the word Fate in ſuch a caſe. No, aſſure your ſelf that was a ſignal diſplay of Divine Providence, and ſuch an one as you cannot expect or demand a greater.

Bioph. But if it were the effect of Providence, as you will needs have it, I wonder how it comes to paſs that there is no ſuch thing now; or why all the reſt of Mankind was neglected by Divine Providence, and only that People, and in that Age and Corner of the World, ſo carefully managed by it.

A viſible Providence over the Jews.

Sebaſt. O *Biophilus*, ask not God an account of his Prerogative, nor much leſs preſcribe to him how he ſhall govern the World. What if he pitying the dark ſtate of the World then, did ſomething extraordinary to relieve and inlighten it? And what if having once given ſuch abundant proof of himſelf, he ſhall think that ſufficient to all After-ages? Or, to ſay no more, what if it pleaſes him to make Faith in ſome reſpects more difficult now than it was then? Who ſhall expoſtulate the matter with him, eſpecially ſince he hath not left us deſtitute of ſufficient grounds to determine a prudent Man in the caſe? Which is all I have pretended to aſſert all this While, and I think I have made

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it good at laſt, though with ſome tedioufneſs of diſcourſe, for which I beg your pardon.

Phil. Dear *Sebaſtian*, do not ſlander our judgments ſo much, as to ſuſpect we ſhould think any thing tedious that is ſo much to the purpoſe. I thank you heartily for the pains you have taken with us; for although (I thank God) I have long lived under a firm perſwaſion both of a Providence here, and a Judgment hereafter; yet I am greatly rejoiced to find all ſure under me, and when my reaſon encourages my devotion: And eſpecially I think my ſelf obliged to you for the ſatisfaction you have given my Neighbour; is it not ſo, *Biophilus?*

Bioph. I tell you plainly, *Sebaſtian* hath ſtaggered me, and I cannot tell what to ſay more for the preſent, but I will conſider further of it at leiſure.

Phil. Ay, but do it quickly, good *Biophilus*, you ſceptical Gentlemen are apt to take too long time to conſider of theſe matters; you know, die we muſt, and that ſhortly too, ſo that we have not any long time to conſider in; what an horrible ſurprize would it be, if whilſt we ſtand doubting and diſputing, we ſhould hear the ſound of the laſt Trump, and be ſummoned to that great Tribunal? When Death once arreſts us, there is no Bail will be taken, we muſt come to a ſtrict account, and await an irreverſible Doom, ſo that there is no dallying in this matter.

If either of us had intelligence that an Enemy were coming upon us with deſign to aſſault us and take away our life, although it were a perſon of but ordinary reputation that brought us the news, yet it would ſtartle us, and we

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ſhould not ſtand diſputing the truth of the relation, but preſently either prepare our ſelves to appeaſe him, or arm our ſelves to encounter him; and then if no Enemy appeared, we could ſecurely expoſtulate the falſe Alarm afterwards. Or if there came a report, that the Sea had broken its banks, and overflowed the plain whereon our Houſes ſtand, I aſſure my ſelf that neither of us would ſtand gravely deliberating, whether it were poſſible or no, or cavilling about the neglect of repairing the banks, or leaſt of all loſe ſo much time as whilſt we could ſend Meſſengers, and expect their return, but firſt get us up to the Mountains, and there at leiſure inform our ſelves of the truth of all circumſtances.

When *Noah*, for no leſs than one hundred and twenty Years together, preached Repentance, and foretold a Flood coming to drown all the World, no queſtion but the generality of Men laugh'd at him as a timorous hypochondriacal Perſon: They could object how unuſual a thing it was he talked of, a thing that no Man had ſeen, or had ever happened to the World before: They would diſcourſe philoſophically in the Caſe too, and repreſent it as a very abſurd thing, to imagine that the water ſhould riſe above the Earth, and overflow the tops of their ſtately Houſes; for (might they ſay) where ſhall there be water enough to do it? from whence ſhould it come? or how ſhould this Fellow have notice of it before all other Men? And perhaps they would conclude, that at worſt they ſhould have time to ſhift for themſelves when they ſee it come in earneſt, and eſcape as well as others. Hereupon they

they ate and drank and feaſted and made merry, and laugh'd at that preceiſe Coxcomb with his new Machine of an Ark: But ſo, ſaith our Saviour, *Shall the coming of the Son of man be.*

Alas, *Biophilus*, whilſt we dream, the Judgment ſlumbers not; whilſt we doubt and diſpute, God is in earneſt; and the time draws on apace, when Chriſt Jeſus, the Judge of the World, ſhall come *in the glory of his Father and of all the holy Angels*, the Heavens ſhall then melt away, and the Earth be on fire from one end of it to another; the dead ſhall riſe out of their Graves, and make an huge Aſſembly; the Books of all Mens Actions ſhall be opened, and the Devil together with every Man's own Conſcience, ſhall be the Accuſers. Then ſhall all thoſe that are conſcious to themſelves to have lived vertuouſly and holily, look up with joy and comfort to ſee their Saviour become their Judge; to find a vindication from all thoſe unjuſt cenſures that have paſt upon them here below; to come to an end of their labours, a reward of their ſervices, the accompliſhment of their faith and hopes. Lord, what joy will be in their countenances, what glory upon their heads! How the Angels ſmile upon them, and welcom them to their journeys end, and Heaven opens in an admirable Scene of light and glory to receive them!

But on the other ſide, all that are privy to themſelves to have lived wickedly, baſely and unprofitably, ſhall look pale and tremble, *and call upon the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of the Lamb that ſits upon the Throne*; for they ſhall ſee all black and diſmal about them, no tears will move pity, no Rhetorick

torick will perſwade, no excuſes will be admitted, no Appeal be allowed, no refuge to be found, nor Reprive to be hoped for; but they ſhall hear that dreadful Sentence, *Depart accurſed into everlaſting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, and ſhall ſee Hell open her mouth to receive them into unquenchable flames.

Bioph. I proteſt you ſpeak with ſuch feeling, *Phil.* that your diſcourſe hath more power upon me, than all the Arguments that ever I heard in my Life. And I know not what is the matter, but my heart trembles; therefore let me once more intreat you to adjourn the remainder of this diſcourſe till another time, and in the mean while I'll conſider of it, as I promiſed you.

Phil. Ah! dear Neighbour, do not prove like that unhappy *Felix* in the Scripture, do not go about to elude what you cannot evade; no, put not off this buſineſs a moment longer: Now that it ſeems God hath touched you heart, quench not his holy Spirit, it may be you will never be in ſuch a temper again, if you loſe this opportunity.

Bioph. I aſſure you I like this temper (as you call it) ſo well, that I do not deſire to feel more of it. But if you are reſolved to go on to torment me, I pray do me the favour firſt to anſwer me this Queſtion. If theſe things be ſo as you repreſent them, how comes it to paſs that Men unconcerned about Religion, die as comfortably many times as any others? The reaſon of my Queſtion is this, becauſe you will pretend that whilſt Men are well in health, and ſwimming with the Tide of Proſperity, they

they may either artificially put off the thoughts of theſe things, though they be true; or the noiſe of buſineſs, and the careſſes of their ſenſes may obſcure all apprehenſion of another World. But ſure, when Men find themſelves dying, and that there is but one way with them, it ſhould be too late for them to flatter themſelves, or to admit of the flatteries of others; then ſurely prejudices ceaſe, and Men are at leiſure to think: The glory of the World cannot dazzle their Eyes when it is leaving them, and they it: What then, I ſay, can be the reaſon if theſe things be true (which you ſpeak ſo affectionately of) that there is not as remarkable a difference in Mens temper of ſpirit when they come to die, as there ſeems to be in their converſation whilſt they are alive?

How it comes to paſs that there is no greater difference in the laſt Act of mens lives.

Sebaſt. I apprehend your queſtion very well, and the reaſons of your asking it too. And for anſwer to it, I pray tell what is the reaſon that Men that love their health and their Eſtates both very well, will nevertheleſs be Drunkards and Whore-Maſters and Gameſters, though they ſee by daily experience, that theſe are very ſure methods to out them of both? You will tell me, I ſuppoſe, that they feed themſelves with abſurd and unreaſonable hopes which fool their diſcretion, or that they are bewitched and beſotted with thoſe kind of pleaſures, and ſo conſider nothing at all. Why juſt ſo it is here, the things we ſpeak of are undoubtedly true, and the miſcariage in them is fatal; but Men are careleſs and incogitant, and ſlip into the pit of deſtruction before they are aware?

they

they live merrily, becauſe they never think of any thing, and they die as ſottiſhly as they lived.

Again, there is another ſort of Men that are captious and conceited, who will chop Logick, as we ſay, with God Almighty; they will have not only their reaſon ſatisfied, but their curioſity alſo, or they will not believe; they muſt ſee a Spirit and Heaven and Hell, or one muſt come from the dead to tell them News out of the other World, or they will not be contented. Now God will not indulge this humour of theirs, and they are reſolved to venture him, that is, they will be damned rather than forgo it.

Beſides, there are others take a great deal of pains to disbelieve, they will uſe all the Arts of Sophiſtry, all the trick and evaſions of wit, intrench and fortifie themſelves in their Atheiſtical conceits; in a word, they will cheat their own reaſon, outface their own Conſcience, and bring upon themſelves a ſtupid inſenſibility of all that is good and vertuous, and ſo, in concluſion, they die quietly, and go ſilently into the bottomleſs pit.

To all this you muſt conſider, that it is very probable that many of theſe Men may be very far from dying chearfully, though we are not able to obſerve their Agonies and torments; for it may very well be, that when they once begin to conſider what a deſperate condition they are in, the very thoughts of that, together with their bodily diſeaſe in conjunction, preſently overwhelms their ſpirits, and makes their paſſage out of the world more compendious, but never the more comfortable.

But

But after all, you ſhall find ſome of the aforeſaid perſons, when they come to die, ſadly bewail their folly and careleſneſs of this kind; but where-ever did you hear of an holy and vertuous Man that ever repented of his choice or pains in Religion, or care of his Soul, and ſolicitude in preparation for this occaſion? It's poſſible indeed ſuch a Man may expreſs no tranſports, becauſe his body is like other Mens, and the ſtrength of his diſeaſe may infeeble his ſpirits and cloud his reaſon, and ſo interrupt the exerciſe of his Faith and Hope. And on the other ſide, the prophane and irreligious Man, though perhaps (as you ſuppoſe) he cannot or will not diſſemble at the approach of death, yet he may be ſottiſh and inſenſible, and then whatſoever difference of ſtate they are entring upon, there may be no diſcernible difference in their departure hence; and ſo you ſee your queſtion will not ſerve to the purpoſe you propounded it for.

Phil. Come, *Biophilus*, leave theſe ſceptical artifices, theſe captious queſtions, do not ſeek out ways to muzzle your own Conſcience, or impoſe upon your reaſon; a Judgment there will be, and it is all the wiſdom in the World to be prepared for it. It is in your power by the grace of God to order matters ſo, that we ſhall rather hope and wiſh for it than fear it; and what vaſt odds is there between them two? You are ſenſible that it is only a Judgment following death, that makes death terrible, at leaſt to our minds and underſtanding. Indeed it's poſſible our bodies may be diſturbed at the aſſaults

The wonderful comfort and advantages of being ſecured againſt a day of Judgment.

aſſaults of it; but meer death can never ſhake our minds, or diſcompoſe one thought, if we are ſatisfied that all will be well after it: and what an happy and deſirable condition were it to be out of the reach of that King of terrours, to ſee light through that dark Vault of the grave, to out-live all a Mans fears, and to live to his hopes? What a ſtrange alteration will that one thing make in a Mans projections and deſigns, in his countenance and in his ſpirit, and in the whole management of himſelf; for who can be afraid of any other accident that hath no cauſe to fear death? Who will be concerned about riches, or be much diſcompoſed whether his temporal affairs ſucceed well or ill, that is provided for Eternity? Who will ſtoop ſo low, as to lay any ſtreſs upon fame and reputation, that hath approved himſelf to God and his own Conſcience, and can ſtand the ſhock of the great Tryal of the day of Judgment? He that is in a condition not to fear death, will have no reaſon to fear Men or Devils or Spirits or ſolitude or darkneſs, but may be as bold as a Lyon, and cannot probably be tempted either to expreſs a mean paſſion, or to do a baſe action; to be ſure he will crouch to no body, flatter and humour no body: for no body can hurt him, and ſo his life is eaſie as well as comfortable, foraſmuch as he hath no body to pleaſe but God and his own conſcience.

But, as I was ſaying, this is to be prepared for; Salvation is not a matter, of courſe nor the Judgment a meer piece of ſtate and formality, but infinitely ſacred and ſolemn; the Judge is wiſe and holy and juſt, the Tryal ſtrict and ſevere,

ſevere, the Doom irreverſible, the Miſery intolerable, if a man miſcarry, as well as the Felicity unſpeakable, if he ſtand right at that Tribunal: and to all this the critical time draws on a-pace; we feel our ſelves daily dying, therefore it concerns us to do what is to be done out of hand.

Bioph. I am convinced that it is the wiſeſt courſe to provide for the buſineſs you ſpeak of, if it could be done without too much trouble.

Phil. Ah! *Biophilus*, can any care be too great in ſuch a concern? Can any thing ſeem troubleſome that may at once ſecure us from all other troubles! But the trouble is not great neither, it is but being ſincerely and heartily religious, and all is done.

Bioph. That is ſoon ſaid, I confeſs, but not ſo ſoon done. Beſides, I am never the wiſer for ſuch a general advice; for there are ſo many Religions in the World, that it's hard to know which to truſt to. Some ſublime Religion to ſuch a heighth of Spirituality (as they call it) that a man cannot tell what to make of it; and again, ſome make no more of it than honeſt Morality. Some dreſs it up ſo fine and gawdily with ſo many Trappings and Ornaments, that it's hard to find what the naked truth of the thing is; and others render it ſo plain and coarſe, that a man is tempted to deſpiſe it. Some repreſent it ſo thin and ſubtle, that a man's reaſon can take no hold of it; and others propound it ſo groſly and abſurdly, that a man had need have a good ſtomach to it, or he could not digeſt it. Some make it a very eaſie thing, a

The differens repreſentations of Religion, a great temptation to Scepticiſm.

trick of Wit, a meer Notion, but the becoming of a Party, or a bare believing; nay, a peculiar Garb, an Hair Shirt, or a Friar's Girdle doth the buſineſs. With others it is a matter of infinite difficulty, and hath ſo many nice and ſtrict obſervations belonging to it, that they are able to diſcourage any pretence to it. In a word, it ſeems to me to be what the Painter pleaſes, foraſmuch as I ſee ſome deſcribe it out of the pleaſantneſs of their own ſanguine phancy, and others out of the black humor of their hypochondriac paſſions: So that upon the whole matter, I think I had as good maintain my own Character, and withhold my aſſent till men are better agreed amongſt themſelves upon the Point.

Sebaſt. God forbid, *Biophilus*, for that you cannot do, unleſs you will adventure to be damned, as certainly you muſt, if you be found to be of no Religion.

Bioph. Why, have you leſs charity for men of my temper, than for all the World beſides? Muſt a Sceptiſt be certainly damned, if there be a Judgment?

Sebaſt. Far be it from me to be uncharitable towards any men, if I could help them; but I muſt tell you, I have leſs hope for that man that hath no faith at all, than for him that hath a bad one; and it muſt be a very bad Religion indeed that is not better than none. For though by reaſon of the variety of Perſwaſions (which you take notice of) a man may be fatally ſo miſled, as to periſh in a blind Devotion; yet certainly he that is ſo phantaſtically wiſe, as to be of no Religion at all, cannot be ſaved. But what need is there of either of theſe? There

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are a great many falſe Religions, it is acknowledged, but there is a Truth too, and that not ſo hard to diſcern as you repreſent it, if a man ſincerely apply himſelf to the ſearch of it.

Bioph. Now you have nickt the buſineſs, you think, as if every Country had not the true Religion, or every man's own perſwaſion were not the truth, at leaſt if they be allowed to be their own Judges.

Sebaſt. Good *Biophilus*, do not jeſt in theſe matters. I know you are a witty man; but do not turn the edge of it againſt your own Soul. Come, I'll tell you a Religion that all the World ſhall agree in, and my Soul for yours, you ſhall be ſafe, if you will comply with it. Do not ſtare, it is no more but this, *live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world*; or if you will have it in other words, reſolve with your ſelf not to do that thing (whatever come of it) that you cannot anſwer to God and your own Conſcience, and do every thing within your power that may approve and recommend you to both, and thence forward fear not a day of Judgment. *A ſure Religion.*

Bioph. Now you ſpeak to the purpoſe indeed, that I muſt needs ſay is good counſel, and ſuch as I think all the World is agreed in; therefore I thank you for it, and I will try to follow it.

Phil. God proſper your reſolution, *Biophilus*. And now, *Sebaſtian*, that we are happily come to this Point, I pray give me leave to put *Biophilus*'s queſtion a little more home to you. I thank God I am ſenſible of the great day approaching, and make ſome conſcience of being

provided for it; but becauſe I would not for all the world be miſtaken in my meaſures in a buſineſs of that moment, I crave the aſſiſtance of your judgment how far that care extends, and particularly what it compriſes. The reaſon of my ſollicitude herein (beſides the conſequence of the thing it ſelf) is, becauſe I have heard it delivered as a ſtanding Rule by ſome men, That the only ſure preparation is, that a man live every day as if it were the laſt he had to live. Which Doctrine hath often raiſed ſcruples in my mind, and I ſuſpect it may have had the like effect upon others; and to tell you my thoughts plainly, I look upon it as unpracticable and inconſiſtent with the common affairs of life; for moſt certainly on that day, which I thought would be the laſt I ſhould live, I would not fail to diſmiſs all other buſineſs whatſoever, I would ſcarce eat, or drink, or ſleep, but wholly apply my ſelf to acts of devotion. Now if that Rule be true, Religion is a more anxious thing than I was aware; and if it be not true, I pray make me underſtand what is the truth in this matter.

Scrupulous and phantaſtical rules of preparation for the day of Judgment reproved.

Sebaſt. I do not know why you ſhould lay much ſtreſs upon my judgment in ſuch a caſe; but if you will have my opinion, it is plainly this, That the Rule you ſpeak of is far more devout than judicious; for as you well obſerve, ſince God Almighty hath cloathed our Souls with Bodies, and placed us in a world of buſineſs, it cannot be that he ſhould expect we ſhould in the whole courſe of our lives ſo ſingly and ſolely apply our ſelves to the affairs of another

nother World, as we ſhould think fit to do juſt when we are going off the Stage, and ſolemnly preparing our ſelves for an immediate appearance at God's Judgment-ſeat. If therefore thoſe men (you ſpeak of) had preſcribed that we ſhould every day think of the day of Judgment, as not knowing how ſoon it may be upon us, or that we ſhould take care every day to advance in our proviſion for it, they had delivered a great and a neceſſary Truth; but when they ſpeak as if they meant, that we muſt do nothing any day, but what we would do, if we were ſure it were our laſt day, they thwart the very order of Divine Providence in the condition of Men, and the conſtitution of the World; they condemn the practice, and call in queſtion the ſtate of the beſt of men; they lay a ſnare for the Conſcience of the weak and timorous: and in a word, they obtrude an impracticable Notion for the moſt concerning and neceſſary Truth.

But you are not to wonder, or be troubled at it. For though there is generally more defect of devotion than of knowledge in the world, yet there are ſome particular men wherein the former exceeds the latter, and ſuch men pleaſe themſelves in a pretty ſaying, without being able to judge of the prudence of it; and whilſt they go about to awaken ſome ſecure and careleſs perſons to a ſerious ſenſe of their eternal concern, are not aware that they afford matter of everlaſting ſcruple and offence to thoſe that are truly tender and conſcientious.

It were eaſie to give you ſundry inſtances of this ſuperfine high ſtrained Divinity; but there is one I will mention for its affinity with that

before us, *viz.* you ſhall find it dogmatically delivered by ſome ſeeming great Caſuiſts, That in certain and indiſputable things, it is a man's Duty to do that which is beſt of the kind, and in uncertain and controverted caſes to take the ſurer ſide. Now if theſe things were laid down as prudential advices only, to direct a man which way to incline himſelf, they were very uſeful; but to make them expreſs meaſures of Duty, is to make more Laws than God hath made, and condemn more things for ſin than he condemns, and conſequently cannot chuſe but imbroil the Conſciences of men. For ſuppoſe Prayer be better than ſecular buſineſs, then upon this Principle I muſt turn *Euchite*, and ſpend all my time in devotion. Suppoſe there be fewer temptations in a Monaſtick life than in common Converſation, then every one that is careful of his Soul, muſt retire into a Cloiſter. If there be difficulties attending Magiſtracy and publick Employment, then I muſt fold up my hands and do nothing but go into my Cell, and pray God to amend the World, though I be called to the other. If bodily Exerciſes and Games have ſome ſnares in them, I muſt allow my ſelf no recreations; nay, I ſhall be put endleſly and anxiouſly to diſpute, whether it be better to give a poor man two pence, or a ſhilling, or five ſhillings, *&c.* whether I ſhall pray three times a day or ſeven times a day; whether an hour or two hours. And indeed every thing I go about will afford inextricable difficulties upon theſe Principles.

But that by the way only: As for the buſineſs in hand, trouble your ſelf no farther than to live every day well, and to be ſure to do nothing

nothing you cannot anſwer; be always getting ground, and growing better and better; as near as you can, do every day ſomething that may turn to account another day, and then comfortably await God's time.

Phil. I thank you heartily both for your direct anſwer and your digreſſion: and I pray pardon me, if I come a little cloſer to you yet. I know you live under a comfortable proſpect of the Day of Judgment, and I am confident you neither would nor could enjoy that even tranquillity, if you were not upon ſure grounds. Now my requeſt is, that you will be ſo free with me, as to make me acquainted with your whole management of your ſelf: For though I have a rule to walk by, yet for fear I ſhould miſapply it, and either through Superſtition and Scrupuloſity overgo it, or by the careleſneſs of my own heart fall ſhort of it, I ſhould be very glad to have an example to interpret it to me.

Sebaſt. I clearly perceive you either love me too much, or know me not ſo well as I thought you did, in that you think of making me your example. Alas! *Phil.* little do you think how many follies and infirmities I labour under, and as little what qualms and dejections of ſpirit I ſometimes feel within my ſelf.

Phil. I confeſs, I do not know you ſo well, but that I deſire to know more of you; and though it be a great thing I ask of you, that you ſhould abſolutely unboſom your ſelf to me; yet you that have done me ſo much good already, I hope will not deny me this advantage of your converſation.

Sebaſt. Ah, dear *Phil.* you may command

me any thing; but I tell you my life hath too many blots in it for you to make a Copy of: in truth, such a precedent will indanger to make you too remiss.

Phil. Now you discourage me more than ever, and make me suspect that it is an harder thing to be saved than I imagined, since you find such difficulty in it.

Sebast. Good *Phil*, excuse me from saying any thing of my self; but (if it were not too tedious for this time) I would give you the History of an holy Friend of mine, which I had from his own mouth, and that I assure my self will be of more use to you, than what you seem so passionately to desire.

Eulabes's History of his own Life, and preparation for Judgment.

Phil. Of whom do you mean?

Sebast. Of my dear Friend *Eulabes*, now with God, a Person of as great Sanctity of Life and comfortableness of Spirit, as Earth can easily admit of.

Phil. I have heard much of the Fame of his Piety, but I never had the happiness to know him. For God's sake let us have his Story, since you will not gratifie me in my first request.

Sebast. I remember the time well when I made much the same request to him, which you have now done to me. And he after he had for a good while modestly declined giving me satisfaction therein (by such excuses as it is not necessary I should now repeat, and I had replied to them as well as I could); at length yielding to my importunity, he began thus.

"Dear Friend (quoth he) though from the "first date of our acquaintance our conversa-

"tion

" tion hath been ſo intimate, and my breaſt " hath been ſo open to you, that I ſcarcely " know any thing by my ſelf that you have not " been privy to; yet becauſe you are pleaſed to " entertain the curioſity to inquire further after " me, I will not ſtick to tell you as well what " happened to me before the commencement " of our friendſhip, as alſo ſuch things as (in " regard they paſſed only betwixt God and my " own Soul) may be unknown to you, though " they were tranſacted ſince.

" Know then, (ſaid he) that about ſuch time " as I had out-grown the meer follies and infir- " mities of my youth, and began, together with " the advance of my bodily ſtrength and vigour, " to make alſo ſome eſſays of underſtanding and " diſcretion, I quickly found that by the Spring- " tide of my blood, and the great encreaſe of " bodily ſpirits, ſeveral very impetuous paſſions " and inclinations boiled up in me, notwith- " ſtanding thoſe ſmall efforts which my reaſon " (as yet) could make to the contrary.

" This I then thought (and do ſtill) to be a " caſe common to other men with my ſelf; and " ſince I have conſidered of it, I am apt to think " that our wiſe Creator ſo ordered the matter, " that theſe two Combatants, Senſe and Reaſon, " ſhould grow up and enter the Liſts together, " to the intent that as Reaſon ſhould not be " without its Antagoniſt to hold it in play: ſo " on the other ſide, thoſe bodily powers ſhould " not be left without a Guide to conduct, con- " troul and manage them.

" However, hereupon bodily inclinations " growing daily ſtronger and ſtronger, and my " Reaſon and Conſcience not being yet foiled

" or

" or corrupted, there aroſe a very ſtrong con-
" flict in me between them, and that as yet of
" very doubtful iſſue; foraſmuch as both be-
" ing parts of my ſelf, I could not eaſily reſolve
" which ſide to incline to.

" In the mean time (as God would have it)
" calling to mind the ſolemnity of my Baptiſm,
" I remembred that then when I was dedicated
" to Chriſt, and entred as a Candidate of eter-
" nal Life, I had renounced the fleſh with the
" affections and luſts. Hereupon therefore I
" reſolved to withſtand them if I could, and
" to this end begged the aſſiſtance of God's
" Grace, and (by the advice of my Parents
" and thoſe good perſons, who having been
" Sureties for me, had a deſire to diſcharge
" their Conſciences of that Truſt which lay up-
" on them) I applied my ſelf to the Biſhop for
" Confirmation. Whereby having obtained not
" only the Bleſſing of my Spiritual Father, but
" made Chriſtian Religion now my own act
" and choice; and beſides, had put ſuch a pub-
" lick obligation upon my ſelf, as would render
" it very ſhameful for me to go back or retreat,
" I from that time forward was under a more
" awful ſenſe of God and Religion, and felt fre-
" quent motions of the Holy Spirit within me.

Here I remember I a little interrupted him, applauding his ſingular felicity in being ſo early ingaged in the way of Heaven, by which means that courſe was now grown habitual to him, and his accounts much eaſier at the day of Judgment.

But he proceeded, ſaying, " It is true indeed
" it was God's great Goodneſs to awaken me to
" a ſenſe of my Duty thus early, as I have told

" you;

" you; but then what by the allurements of
" pleaſures, which have always too poinant a
" reliſh with younger years, what by ingage-
" ment in buſineſs which grew upon me after-
" wards, and what through the contagion of
" example, which ſurrrounds a man with too
" common inſtances of careleſneſs in theſe
" weighty matters, I was drawn off from any
" cloſe attendance upon Religion, until it plea-
" ſed God in his wiſe Methods of Grace to lay
" his hand upon me in a dangerous fit of ſick-
" neſs; and this partly, as it ſtained all the beau-
" ty of the World, which heretofore allured me;
" partly alſo, as it mortified and enfeebled thoſe
" bodily powers which before were too potent
" in me, but principally as it gave me leiſure
" and inclination to recollect my ſelf; I there-
" upon (ſeeing nothing but death before me)
" fell into a great concern for another life, and
" ſo by degrees came to a ſolemn reſolution of
" making Religion my chief buſineſs, and took
" all the care poſſible, that ſo I might be pre-
" pared for the great day of Trial.

" Now becauſe this is the point which (I per-
" ceive) you enquire after, I will acquaint you
" with the method I purſued; and to deal faith-
" fully with you (as I hope I did with my own
" Soul) the ſtreſs of my preparations lay in
" theſe three things.

" Firſt, Becauſe I was ſure that an holy life
" muſt needs be the beſt Paſs-port for the other
" World; therefore I conſidered how I might
" keep my ſelf cloſeſt to my Duty, and walk in
" all the Commandments of God as blameleſs
" as it was poſſible.

" Secondly, Becauſe I knew that I had failed
" here-

" heretofore, and feared I ſhould again in ſeve-
" ral things fall ſhort of my Duty; therefore I
" bethought my ſelf how I might do ſomething
" extraordinary, if not to make up thoſe de-
" fects, yet to ſhew at leaſt the ſincerity of my
" love to God and Religion, and the value I
" had for the World to come.

" Thirdly and principally, In conſideration of
" the Purity and Juſtice of God, and the ſtrict-
" neſs of his Laws, I deſired and endeavoured
" to intereſt my ſelf in the Satisfaction and In-
" terceſſion of my Saviour.

1. " For the firſt of theſe, namely, the appro-
" ving my ſelf to God in the integrity of an
" holy life, I conſidered that Eternal Life not
" being a thing of courſe, or naturally due to
" men, but the ſingular gift of God, our hopes
" of it and title to it muſt depend upon the per-
" formance of ſuch conditions as he ſhould think
" fit to impoſe: and foraſmuch as no man can
" know God's mind, and what he will be plea-
" ſed with, unleſs he himſelf reveal it; there-
" fore in the firſt place I did not content my
" ſelf with humane Writings and Moral Diſ-
" courſes, nor much leſs to conform my ſelf to
" the meaſures and cuſtoms of the World, but
" ſet my ſelf daily and diligently to ſtudy the
" holy Scriptures, and took the meaſures of my
" Duty, and the rule of my Life thence. And
" to this I joined daily and earneſt prayer, that
" it would pleaſe Divine Goodneſs not only to
" make me underſtand his Will, but guide and
" enable me to perform it; that he would pre-
" ſerve me from prejudices, from inadverten-
" cy, from fooliſh opinions and raſh actions:
" and this I performed not cuſtomarily and for-

" mally

" mally, as if I complimented God Almighty,
" but with my utmoſt vigour and intention of
" ſpirit, and never thought I had acquitted my
" ſelf therein till I found my heart warmed with
" its own motion.

" More particularly, becauſe I found that
" hard ſtudy and ſicklineſs of body, had made
" me ſomewhat ſubject to the diſorders of the
" Iraſcible (as heretofore health and plenty had
" inclined me to the Concupiſcible); therefore
" I vehemently implored the Divine Grace for
" my relief, and have been frequently conſtrain-
" ed to allay a ſtorm of paſſion with a ſhowre
" of tears.

" Beſides this, I took ſpecial care to keep out
" of vicious and licentious Company, which I
" was confident if it did not taint me with ſome
" ill example, would be ſure to cool my heat,
" and abate my edge to Religion: and contra-
" riwiſe, I contrived as much as poſſibly I could
" to keep ſuch Converſation as was likely to
" provoke and inflame me in the courſe I had
" propounded to my ſelf.

" And leſt all this ſhould not be ſufficient to
" ſecure me of my intentions, every Evening I
" erected a petty Tribunal within my ſelf, and
" called my ſelf to account for the day paſt, if
" I had ſlipped any opportunity of doing or
" receiving good; if any raſh word or action
" had eſcaped me; if any earthly or ſenſual af-
" fection had been ſtirring in me; if I had been
" guilty of any inſtance of injuſtice, that here-
" after might riſe up in judgment againſt me,
" I repented and made my peace with God and
" Man, as far as it was poſſible, before I ſlept. I
" examined my ſelf alſo what progreſs I had

" made

" made that day towards Heaven, whether, now
" I had ſpent a day of my life, I was a days
" Journey onward of my way, and what I had
" to ſhew for the expence of that day, I always
" took, as I ſaid, the Evening for this buſineſs,
" both in regard of the privacy and quiet of
" that Seaſon, and alſo becauſe I found that
" then the ſolitude and darkneſs of the nights
" were eaſie, and the ſleep comfortable when I
" had firſt cleared all ſcores; and beſides, I
" was cautious, leſt the interpoſition of ſleep
" ſhould have made me forget the paſſages of
" the former day, if I had deferred the account
" of them till the next.

" Beſides all this, I found it neceſſary (and
" accordingly practiſed) to ſet one day aſide in
" every month, and more ſolemnly and wholly
" dedicated it to this buſineſs, to romage my
" own heart, to compare my ſelf with my ſelf,
" and to obſerve how much I advanced in my
" great deſign.

2. " The ſecond part of my care (as I told
" you) was to efface thoſe errors of my life,
" which had either wittingly or unwillingly
" eſcaped me. Now to this purpoſe, I was very
" deſirous to do ſome exemplary good things,
" that I might lift up the head, and raiſe the
" ſpirit of Piety in the World; and the rather,
" to the intent, that if I had done any hurt by
" ill example formerly, I might, when I could
" not revoke the act, yet prevent the contagion
" of it. And beſides, I was watchful of, and
" gladly embraced all opportunities of demon-
" ſtrating the ſincerity of my love to God,
" though it was by a coſtly or difficult ſervice;
" for, I made no doubt, but the more there was

" of

" of ſelf-denial in a vertuous action, the greater
" was the evidence of Grace and Divine Love
" in performing it. Upon this account I could
" well have been content it would have pleaſed
" God to have given me a juſt occaſion of ſome
" ſmart, but tolerable ſufferings for him; and
" with this proſpect I have put my ſelf upon
" ſome meaſures of Charity that were to the
" very utmoſt of my ability, if not beyond it;
" I have interpoſed my ſelf voluntarily for the
" reſcue of ſome deſolate and oppreſſed perſon
" from a potent Adverſary, and thereby deri-
" ved the trouble upon my ſelf which I protect-
" ed that perſon from; I have put my ſelf for-
" ward to reclaim ſome peeviſh deluded Secta-
" ry, or ſome vicious perſon, from whom I have
" had very ingrateful treatment for my good
" will, that by all or ſome of theſe I might
" ſhew that I loved God as well as my ſelf: not
" that I had any proud conceit or opinion of
" Supererogation in any thing I could do or ſuf-
" fer; ſo far from it, that I am ſenſible, that
" when I have done all I can, I muſt acknow-
" ledge my ſelf an unprofitable ſervant, and
" that I have not done ſo much as was my Duty
" to do. Notwithſtanding, as a Subject, that
" hath been in Rebellion againſt his Prince, or
" ſome way or other diſobliged him, will be
" glad to be employed in the moſt difficult ſer-
" vices, that he may ſhew his Loyalty, and re-
" cover his Favour: So I who was ſenſible, that
" in many things I had offended the Divine Ma-
" jeſty, could not chuſe but prize an occaſion of
" doing ſomething more than matter of ſtrict
" Duty, that I might ſhew, that nevertheleſs I
" loved him: And indeed it ſeems to me, that

" thoſe

" those who pretend so much modesty and humility, as to be scrupulous of over-doing in " this manner, are only in reality afraid of loving " him too much, which I am sure is impossible. " And therefore I find that such free-will Offerings give a Man's heart great assurance, and " enable a Man to look with the more comfortable erection of mind towards God and the " day of Judgment. So I observed *Nehemiah*, " *Chap.*13. *vers.*14. when he had shewed himself " publick-spirited, and generously and with considerable difficulty and hazard to himself had " asserted the interest of the oppressed Jews and " their Religion, he then with an holy confidence " addresses himself to God in these words, *Remember me, O Lord, for this, and wipe not out the good deeds which I have done*, &c. This, I " take it, is *laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come*, this is, *making friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations.* Such actions, I say, either of Piety or " Charity aforesaid, are as it were the drawing " a Bill upon God Almighty, to be paid in the " other World, and making a wise and frugal " Purchace of a Reversion in Heaven.

" Wherefore (as I told you) I studied all opportunities, and consulted the utmost of my " ability to do some remarkably good things, " that might be beneficial to the World or to " Religion when I was dead and gone, and endeavoured to sow such seed as whose fruit " should by the grace of God be fresh and lasting to the very day of Judgment.

3. " But when all was done, I laid the greatest stress of all upon the third and last part of

" my

" my preparation, and that was in intereſſing
" my ſelf in the Satisfaction and Interceſſion of
" my Saviour. For beſides the many and great
" failings I was ſenſible of, I conſidered alſo the
" purity of the Divine Nature was ſuch, that
" *he found folly in his Angels*, and deteſted ſin
" where-ever he found it; that his Law was
" ſtrict and perfect; that it was impoſſible any
" thing ſhould be acceptable to ſuch a Majeſty,
" or make amends for the breach of ſuch a Law,
" but that which was perfect too; that nothing
" could make atonement for ſin but a Lamb with-
" out ſpot; that nothing could ſucceſsfully in-
" tercede for us but the only Son of God. There-
" fore I ſet an infinite value upon the diſcovery
" of the Light and Grace of the Goſpel, I with
" all heartineſs and thankfulneſs embraced the
" Terms of the new Covenant, I endeavoured
" to affect my ſelf with the higheſt ſenſe of love
" and gratitude towards my Lord Jeſus Chriſt,
" I pleaded his Sacrifice in my Prayers, I fed
" my Faith with his Blood, I raiſed my hopes
" by having ſo powerful an Advocate with the
" Father, I comforted my ſelf againſt the accu-
" ſations of the Devil and my own Conſcience,
" and all my black and melancholy thoughts, by
" the conſideration, that he was appointed Judge
" of the World, that was in humane Nature,
" who had been ſenſible of our infirmities, had
" experience of our temptations, and had ſo
" much good will to us as to die for us. I ac-
" knowledged and adored his Divinity, I con-
" feſſed him before Men, I gloried in his Croſs
" and Sufferings, I frequently obſerved the Me-
" morial of his Death and Paſſion in the Sacra-
" ment, I joined my ſelf to his Church, I ho-

" noured his Miniſters, I reverenced all his In-
" ſtitutions; and in a word, as the higheſt and
" trueſt honour I could do to him, I endeavour-
" ed to be like him, by imitation of his ſincer-
" ty, purity, meekneſs and goodneſs, in confi-
" dence that upon theſe terms he would own
" me when he comes again in his glorious Ma-
" jeſty.

" This (ſaid he) hath been the courſe and
" care of my life, from ſuch time as I became in
" earneſt ſenſible of the concern of another
" World, and this is the ſumm of my conſtant
" preparations for the day of Judgment; and
" in this poſture I endeavour always to be found
" whenſoever God calls me. I confeſs I ſhould
" be right glad (if it pleaſe God to give me
" opportunity (to make ſome more ſpecial and
" particular preparations againſt the approaches
" of death, if I could be aware of it, and to trim
" and ſnuff my Lamp againſt the Bridegroom
" comes; but for that God's will be done: how-
" ever by his Grace I hope I ſhall not be utterly
" ſurprized nor diſmayed, having made this
" habitual proviſion for it. Thus far he.

Eulabes his more ſpecial preparations for death towards the approaches of it.

Phil. Your Friend *Eulabes* appears to have been a moſt exemplary, holy, and a wiſe Man, and the relation which you have given us, as from his own mouth, exceedingly fits the Character of ſuch a Perſon, for there is both a lively Spirit of Piety breathing in it, and withal ſuch a becoming and proportionable modeſty, as ſufficiently aſſures the real truth of the whole Narrative, foraſmuch as I cannot ſuſpect you would impoſe upon us herein; nor can I believe it eaſie

(if

(if poſſible) for an evil Man to draw a Scene of Vertue with ſo many Arguments of probability. For my own part, I have been all along ſo affected with it, that nothing hath grieved me ſo much, as that you ſeemed to draw towards an end of your Story, as well as the good Man to the end of his Life. And now I have a thouſand Queſtions, which I would gladly put to you further about him, but that I am afraid of being too troubleſome to you, eſpecially ſince it grows late. However I pray pardon me whilſt I interrogate you a little about the laſt Act of ſo brave a Perſon. I remember you ſaid he intended, if God gave him opportunity, to make ſome more particular and ſpecial preparations at the approaches of death; now I have a great curioſity to inquire, whether it pleaſed God to afford him ſuch opportunities as he wiſhed, and what uſe he made of them? Gratifie me in this, and I will detain you no longer at this time.

Sebaſt. Why therein, dear *Phil*, I will ſatisfie you as well as I am able. You muſt know therefore, that *Eulabes* having through the courſe of his whole life maintained a ſtrict temperance, and now well advanced in years, it happened to him (as it is uſual in ſuch caſes) by the good Providence of God, to have a gradual and leiſurely diſſolution; he was neither racked to death by the intolerable pains of the Gout or Stone, nor hurried out of the World in the fiery Chariot of a violent Fever, nor ſtabbed by an Apoplexy, nor ſtupified by a Lethargy, but was mildly and gently ſummoned by a lingring ſickneſs, ſo that inſenſibly he felt himſelf dying. By this means he had both time,

ſtrength and underſtanding to ſettle every thing according to his wiſhes. When therefore he ſaw the Harbingers of death draw on towards him, and that he could not long maintain the little Fort of life againſt the Confederate force of ſo many infirmities as beſieged it, he then diſpoſed himſelf for a Surrender.

In the firſt place, having formerly in better health made his Will, and ſetled his temporal Affairs, he now diſmiſſed all buſineſs, forbid all impertinent talk, all troubleſome Viſitants, and diſcharged his Phyſicians alſo, as finding no farther uſe of them; and forthwith ſent for the Phyſician of his Soul, the Miniſter of his Pariſh, a plain, hearty and ſincerely good Man. And he being come, my Friend addreſſes himſelf to him, giving him hearty thanks for all the pains he had taken in the courſe of his Miniſtry in that place to do their Souls good. Wherein (ſaith he) it hath pleaſed God ſo to order it, that you have often come home to my caſe, and touched the very diſtemper of my heart, as if you had been within me; for which I humbly thank Almighty God, and again and again than you, and 'pray God reward it in another World.

Now, Sir, (proceeded he) that great Judge of all the World is calling me to account of all the actions of my Life; I have therefore ſent for you to audite them before-hand, that ſo by your aſſiſtance I may either know my Errours, and repair whatſoever is amiſs, whilſt yet I have a little time left me to do it in; or if I have ſtated my matters rightly, may appear with the better aſſurance at that Tribunal. I have always found you faithful in your Doctrine,

and

and I do not doubt but you will be impartial in this application.

At this point I offered to go out, and leave them private; which he perceiving, took me by one hand, and the Miniſter by the other, and then continued his diſcourſe. I will give you (ſaid he to the Miniſter) the Hiſtory of my life, at leaſt I will not conceal from you any main paſſage of it, be it for me or againſt me, that ſo you may paſs a judgment upon my ſpiritual ſtate; and I deſire you, my dear Friend *Sebaſtian*, to be preſent, who have been privy to the moſt critical moments of it, to the intent that you may witneſs againſt me before this Man of God, if I falſifie in any thing. This ſaid, he laid open the courſe of his life, and amongſt ſeveral other things, which either I do not now ſo well remember, or think not fit to repeat, he delivered the ſubſtance of that, whereof I have given you a large account before; and then he conjured him in the Name of God to deal freely and plainly with him upon the whole matter.

The holy Man (like a Jury, in a manifeſt caſe) without long deliberation quickly brought in a Verdict of comfort to him. Which when *Eulabes* perceived, with his Eyes fixed upon him, and a countenance ſomewhat cheared; Well, ſaid he, God be thanked, if it be ſo, as I hope it is; for I reſt aſſured Almighty Goodneſs deſpiſes not the meaneſt ſincerity. But I humbly and earneſtly beſeech you, Sir, give me alſo the Abſolution of the Church, that I may go out of the World under the comfort of ſo publick and authentick a Teſtimony. Which when the Miniſter had ſolemnly performed, he intreated

treated him further to administer to him the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that so (said he) seeing as it were my Saviour Crucified before my Eyes, and pouring out his Blood for Sinners, I may the more firmly believe the pardon of my own sins, and upon the Wings of Faith and Affection raise my self towards Heaven.

This, after the interposition of Prayers and Meditation and holy discourse, was administred to him; but, Lord, what an Ecstacy of devotion was the good Man now in! What tokens of humility, affection, thankfulness and intention of mind were then to be read in his countenance and deportment! most certainly Christ Jesus was present really, though not carnally, and his Soul fed it self most savourily upon him. These things being done, he dismissed the Minister for that time, not without real expressions of his thankfulness to him for his pains and assistance, nor without a liberal alms to be disposed at his discretion amongst the Poor, earnestly intreating him to remember him constantly in the Prayers of the Church, that thereby he might be holpen on his Journey towards Heaven, where he hoped shortly to arrive.

Some time after this, when by some repose he had recovered a little strength, his Family was called together to his Beds-side, with some others of his Friends and Relations; all whom he most earnestly cautioned against looseness of life, and prophaneness of spirit, assuring them in the words of a dying Man, of the great reality and infinite importance of Religion; he charged them, as they would answer it at that great Day which was certainly coming, that they should not suffer themselves either to be debauched into care-

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leſsneſs and lukewarmneſs, nor abuſed and cheated into phantaſtry and opinionativeneſs in Religion, but perſiſt in the good old way, reverence their Miniſter, keep to the Church, and make the ſerving of God the greateſt care and buſineſs of their lives. Then he diſcourſed admirably to them of the vanity of the World, the uncertainty of Life, the comforts of Religion, and the joys of Heaven, till his ſpirits began to be ſpent, and his ſpeech a little to falter. At other times he retreated into himſelf, and entertained converſe with God by Prayers and holy Meditations, in which what are the elevations of his Faith, what the holy raptures of his Love, what humble abjections of himſelf at the feet of Chriſt, what reſignations of himſelf to the will of God, what pleading of the promiſes of the Goſpel, and recumbency upon the Interceſſion of his Saviour, we could not be privy to further than as we ſaw his hands and eyes earneſtly lift up to Heaven, ſometimes a ſtream of tears falling from his Eyes, and other times interchangeably a chearful ſmile ſitting upon his countenance; in which poſture bodily ſtrength being now exhauſted, he with a gentle ſigh reſigned up his Soul to God.

Thus I have given you the laſt paſſages of this good Man (now no doubt in Heaven) if I have not tired you with the relation, though I confeſs I am not very apt to ſuſpect that, both becauſe I have done it in compliance with your deſire; and beſides, I judge of other Men by my ſelf, and becauſe I am never weary of thinking or ſpeaking of him; therefore imagine other Men may be of the ſame mind.

Phil.